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A. Book of Ballad Stories



"He spurned the door with his foot,
It went up well and fine."

**A Book of
BALLAD
STORIES**

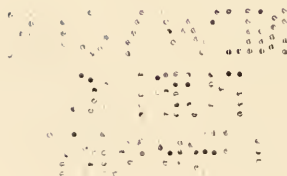
By
MARY MACLEOD

With Introduction by **EDWARD DOWDEN**

ILLUSTRATIONS by **A.G. WALKER, A.R.A.**



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YOUNG readers may well claim their part in the delight given to many generations by the stories—full of spirit, adventure, generous feeling—which have been handed down by the best of our old Ballads. At a later time the stories may lead them to the poems, and acquaintance with the stories will deprive the poems of none of their charm. When the ballads lived their true life on the lips of singers or reciters, they pleased all the more because their themes were familiar to the hearers; they were sung or said only to be sung or said again; they lived by virtue of the fact that they were constantly repeated, and that a pleasure was perpetually renewed. “I never heard the old song of Percie and Douglas,” wrote Philip Sidney in the often-quoted words, “that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet.”

A ballad belongs to nobody, or rather to everybody.

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Introduction

No author's name is connected with any of our older ballads ; no author in any of these poems tells us about himself. Our ballads, in the form in which we possess them, are not of the earliest, primitive kind ; and no doubt individual singers had much to do with their formation. But if we were to catch a primitive ballad, and ask it how it came to be what it is, perhaps it could not give a more exact answer than that of Topsy in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—" 'Spects I growed." When we go on to consider by what processes such a poem grew, we are partly in the region of conjecture, but partly also in the world of ascertained fact. There are tribes and peoples still living on the face of the earth among whom songs and stories in verse actually grow, and can be watched in the processes of growth. Although our own ballads are in a considerable measure literary rather than popular, in a considerable measure the creations of art rather than the offspring of Nature—if we may, for a moment, regard art as separate from Nature—they retain various features which for their origin must be referred back to the primitive models. These fixed—in part, at least—the type. The refrain, the repetitions, the ballad formulas, the question and answer, identical in their general outline, but varying in their details from verse to verse—these, if not indications of a popular origin for the particular poem, are indications of the fact that poetry of a popular kind, which grew on the lips of the folk, had aided in determining the form.

Still, it may be asked, How does a poem grow without an author ? The answer is : The author is the people ; the work is the creation of a group of persons occupied

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with the same theme, and animated by a common emotion. The word *ballad* is derived from the late Latin *ballare*, to dance ; and it originally meant a song intended as the accompaniment to a dance, and also the tune to which the song is sung. "Different members" of a dancing throng, writes Professor Kittredge in a valuable essay prefixed to "English and Scottish Popular Ballads" (1905), "one after another, may chant each his verse, composed on the spur of the moment, and the sum of these various contributions makes a song. This is communal composition, though each verse, taken by itself, is the work of an individual." If there be a refrain, the whole throng may join in as a chorus, and the refrain may serve to inspire, control, and regulate the mood of the singers. Should the question be put by one of the supposed speakers in the ballad, "Why does your brand so drop with blood?" the next singer will reply, "I have killed my hawk." But a hawk's blood is "never so red"; and so another singer will go on to allege that it is the blood of a red-roan steed, and the questions and answers will be taken up and carried on until discovery is made that the blood is blood of a father. The ballad of "Edward"—claimed by some, with no good evidence, for Lady Wardlaw—as we have it, did not originate in what we may call a game of dance and song; but it reflects, in the art of its composition, the form of earlier folk-poetry. Professor Kittredge reminds us that "in the Farøe Islands, a few generations ago, it was common for a group to surround some fisherman who had been unlucky, or had otherwise laid himself open to ridicule, and to improvise a song about him, each contributing

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his verse or stanza." The gift of improvisation commonly perishes when the demand for it ceases, when poetry no longer lives upon the lips of men, but is preserved for men's uses in the printed page. The stream then flows no longer; the water is preserved in a cistern.

Our ballads, however, are in the main the productions of individual singers, working on older material, and influenced by the tradition of older models. These singers were poets of the people, who cared only for the song itself, who did not seek for posthumous glory, and who have left no name. In some instances a professional minstrel may have been the poet. In some instances he may have taken the matter of his story from some medieval romance, and condensed it into a ballad. Again, in some instances, the story may have been a fragment of contemporary or recent history, and the persons of the narrative may have been the actual persons of history. But history repeats itself, and history sometimes bears a resemblance to romance or fictitious narrative. With an alteration of names, and a slight recasting of incidents, it would sometimes have been easy to adapt an older theme to contemporary events, and heighten the interest of traditional romance with the interest of historical actuality.

It must be admitted that there is much difference of opinion among scholars as to the origin of our ballad literature. Scorn has been cast upon the theory that the poems represent in any sense work spontaneously created by the folk. They have been characterised by Mr. G. Gregory Smith, in his volume "The Transition Period" (chapter vi.), as "part of the literary débris of the Middle

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Ages." He maintains that the ballad is not a popular *genre*; that in structure as well as in matter it is a "literary" product; and that the peculiarities of style which are to modern eyes "the hall-mark of ballad-style" indicate, in fact, not native simplicity, but, rather, "the atrophy of romantic tradition." A like view is presented by Mr. Courthope in the chapter entitled "The Decay of English Minstrelsy," which brings the first volume of his "History of English Poetry" towards its close. If we adhere, as there seems to be good ground for doing, to the belief that ballad poetry had at the first a "communal" origin, as it is called, there is no necessity that we should deny that a fragment of truth is embodied in the rival theory. The professional minstrel, welcome in court and castle, no doubt, when the earlier poetical romances were declining, added his contribution to a *genre* which in the main was certainly "popular" in its matter, and which still reflected by its form the creation of the artistic instincts of the folk.

A mediæval air hangs about our best ballads, and naturally, for many of them probably belong to the decline of the Middle Ages. The manners, the sentiment, the love of the marvellous, the intrusion of the supernatural, the chivalrous gallantry of some, the yeoman heroism of others, the atrocity of certain ballads, the fierce crimes and fierce revenges, are characteristic of the time. But a ballad, though the creation of an individual singer, whether a poet of the people or a minstrel whose art was self-conscious, once made to live upon the lips of men, became the common possession of the folk, and became by that fact subject to vicissitude. These

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poems were liable to losses, but they might also receive gains in the course of oral transmission. Now an effect might be heightened by some touch of true genius, and again a hole in the ballad might be filled awkwardly by an awkward botcher. Local allusions or local colour, proper to this district or to that, might be added to enhance the pleasure of the hearers. If the original singer were to come to life after the lapse of a century or two, he might hardly be able to recognise his own telling of the tale. But he would have no right to complain. When he himself received the material which he refashioned, it was probably already old. It was not his own, and it may have assumed many forms in many lands : it had perhaps been sung in Denmark or Norway in one way, and in a somewhat different fashion in England ; a second English or Scottish singer may have treated it in a manner that pleased himself. The poetic material was alive, and was subject to the various developments of a living thing, adapting itself everywhere to its environment. The writer of the stories in this volume has gone to many sources, has compared several versions of one and the same ballad, and with good judgment decided to exercise the right to enrich the narrative with whatever could be harmonised from the several forms of the same joyous or passionate and pathetic tale. In so doing, she has wrought in accordance with the genius of ballad poetry, which freely took its gains wherever they might fittingly be found.

Mr. Lang has insisted in more places than one on the vast superiority of the Scottish over the English ballads “ in vigour, poetic touch, and the moving of supernatural

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awe." Would it be satisfactory to both divisions of Great Britain if it were decided that many of the finest ballads belong to the line of land and water, river and vale and moor, where England and Scotland meet—to the Border District, alive in ancient days with foray and fight, with gallantry of men and griefs of women ? There, on the Border, not only such incidents as are related in several of the ballads might readily occur, and doubtless, in some instances, did in fact occur ; over and above this, the conditions of life quickened the blood, stirred the brain, aroused the passions, and called forth the temper of mind from which ballad poetry naturally came into being. Not only did action often assume the aspect of romance, not only were deeds of prowess done ; the individuality of character from which the romance of life arises was called forth and was sustained, and the daring of a bold leader found its response in the loyalty of his followers or his clan. There might be much that was violent, savage, and untamed, but there could be no dull placidity of temper, no lethargy of heart or will. Love and death became neighbours. And where sudden alarms, dreadful suspenses, hopes contending with fears, and fears contending with hopes, the marching or riding forth of strong men, the bearing home of the body of husband or of son, were all too frequent, it was natural that presages and omens, the lamenting water-spirit, the kelpie of the burn, the wraith upon the desolate moor, the elfin troop, should haunt the imaginations of those who strove and loved and sorrowed. A strange sense of the mysteries of human existence, a feeling for the powers which play upon our lives, and which are

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not in our own control, and, beside these, a certain sentiment—full of curiosity, awe, wonder—for external nature, were projected into the shapes of local superstition.

In some of the genuinely English ballads, if less is found of fantasy and mystery and fairy charm, there are a hearty and substantial spirit of life, a vigorous joy, a manly energy, which bring to the reader their own cheer and courage. Chief among these, of course, is the Robin Hood cycle. The ballads are of various dates, and of varying degrees of merit. Certainly at a date as early as the last quarter of the fourteenth century Robin Hood was already a hero of the popular imagination. In Langland's "Piers the Plowman," his allegorical personage Sloth confesses that he knows "rymes of Robin Hood" better than he knows the *Pater Noster* chanted by the priest. Probably about a hundred or a hundred and twenty years later—but the precise date cannot be ascertained—"A Gest of Robyn Hode," which constitutes what may be called a miniature epic, was printed. Whether an outlaw of that name ever actually lived is uncertain; he is known to us only through ballad poetry and historical references which were founded on that poetry. But there is nothing to compel us to be doubters, or at least unbelievers, and it is pleasant to suppose that a person so real for our imagination veritably stepped in the greenwood and shot the King's deer for his meat. It may be that we shall have to yield up Maid Marian to the sceptics, for she enters the Robin Hood story after it had taken its original shape; but she, too, is needed, and if she did not exist she had a right to be invented.

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Ben Jonson needed her for his "Sad Shepherd," and Drayton for the twenty-sixth song of his "Polyolbion":

"Her clothes tuck'd to the knee, and dainty braided hair,
With bow and quiver arm'd, she wander'd here and there
Amongst the forests wild; Diana never knew
Such pleasures, nor such harts as Mariana slew."

Bishop Latimer, it will be remembered, found cause of complaint in his sermon before King Edward VI. that the Robin Hood celebrations hindered his preaching in a country church. But another divine, Thomas Fuller, has a kindly word for Robin. "One may wonder," he writes in his "Worthies of England," "how he escaped the hand of Justice, dying in his bed, for ought is found to the contrary; but it was because he was rather a *merry* than a *mischievous* thief (complementing passengers out of their purses), never murdering any but *Deer*, and this popular Robber feasted the Vicinage with his Venison." He became—as Professor Hales happily puts it—the hero of the commons, as King Arthur had become the hero of the higher classes.

Our ballads have reached us in many different ways. A few are found in manuscripts of early date. A few, like "A Gest of Robyn Hode," were printed possibly before the close of the fifteenth century. "The Nut-Brown Maid" appears for the first time in a volume—Arnold's "Chronicle"—printed at Antwerp in 1502. It is there placed, apropos of nothing, amid surrounding matter of the most incongruous and prosaic kind. Several of our old ballads were issued during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as broadsides, and were hawked about the country by every wandering Autolycus for

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the delectation of every poetical Mopsa and Dorcas. More often, however, these broadside ballads were concerned with some event or incident of the day, some tragic crime or some nine days' wonder, like the ballad offered by Shakespeare's Autolycus, which had been sung by "a fish that appeared upon the coast on Wednesday, the four-score of April, forty thousand fathom above water." More important and valuable than the ballads derived from any of these sources—if we set aside the manuscript collection used by Percy for his "Reliques," the date of which manuscript lies near the middle of the seventeenth century—are those obtained by collectors from the lips of persons who sung or recited verse which they had themselves learnt from the lips of others. These, when so recovered, were still living the true life of the ballad; they were still subject to the vicissitudes of oral transmission, and had not received the fixed form of the printed page.

What is worthless sinks in the course of time out of sight and is forgotten; what is of merely transitory interest is blown away by the winds of change. The ballads that have lived from generation to generation in the memories of men have lived by virtue of their beauty, their power of passion, their joyous temper, their pathos, their truth. The people have always loved them. But beside the people, they have had, during upwards of two centuries, illustrious lovers. Dryden was a collector of ballads; Samuel Pepys and the Lord Dorset of that day—author of the song "To all you ladies now on land"—indulged the same taste. "Little Musgrave" and "Chevy Chase" were included, with other ballads, in

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Dryden's collection of "Miscellany Poems." Addison surprised some of his contemporaries by his praise of "Chevy Chase" in a number of the *Spectator*. Prior, in the taste of his time, transformed "The Nut-Brown Maid" into his "Henry and Emma," and accompanied his eighteenth-century version with a reprint of the original poem. In the years 1723-1727 appeared the first collection of English ballads. Allan Ramsay led the way to the recognition of the literary value of the ballad poetry of Scotland. But the great event in the history of the eighteenth-century revival of the ballad was the publication in 1765 of Percy's "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry." It is true that he thought it necessary to apologise for the rudeness of some of the older pieces which he printed, and that he endeavoured "to atone" for that rudeness by adding some "modern attempts in the same kind of writing." It is true that he did not faithfully adhere to the text of the folio manuscript, which he found lying on the floor of a house in Shropshire, and rescued from the hands of the housemaids, who had found it convenient for lighting the fires. He omits, alters, adds, striving thus to render the poems acceptable to an age that loved its own veneer and varnish. Nevertheless, the work achieved for literature by Percy was great, and great were its results. His book fell in with a new stream of tendency which was not merely English, but European, and which found its German representatives in Herder and Goethe. Beneath a plantain-tree, in the ruins of an old-fashioned arbour, Scott first read the volumes of "Reliques." "The summer day," he says, "sped onwards so fast that, notwithstand-

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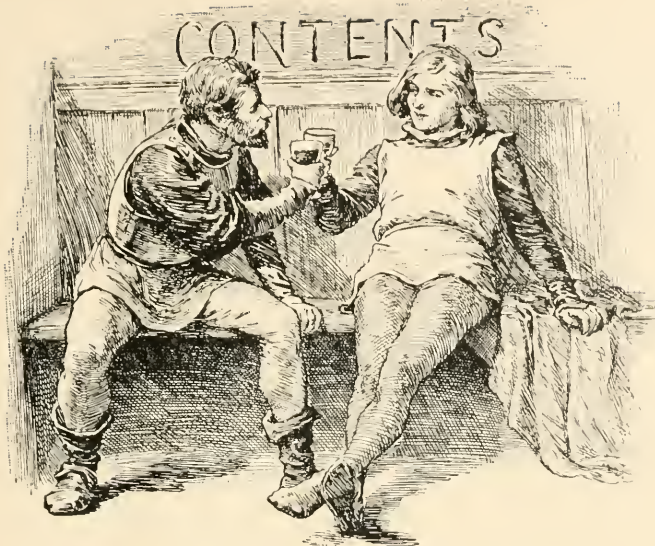
ing the sharp appetite of thirteen, I forgot the hour of dinner, was sought for with anxiety, and was still found entranced in my intellectual banquet." He overwhelmed his school-fellows with tragical recitations from the ballads, and as soon as he could scrape a few shillings together he bought a copy of the beloved volumes. "Nor do I believe," he adds, "I ever read a book half so frequently or with half the enthusiasm." The manuscript which Percy saved from destruction, and which was the most important of his sources for the "Reliques," was reprinted with scholarly accuracy and scholarly annotations by Professor Hales and Mr. Furnivall in 1867, a little more than a century later than Percy's own publication.

Other collections followed the "Reliques" at no great interval. The names of David Herd, John Pinkerton, and Joseph Ritson deserve to be remembered with honour in connection with the ballad revival of the eighteenth century. Walter Scott published the first edition of his "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border" in 1802-1803. It added some two score ballads previously unprinted to the treasures of our literature, and among these were several of the highest excellence. To notice even briefly the most important collections of the nineteenth century—those of Jamieson, Finlay, Buchan, Kinloch, Motherwell, and others—would occupy several pages, and would perhaps prove wearisome. Gains from several collections, both elder and more recent, reach the reader of these stories, who may be grateful for the diligence, as well as the skill, of the story-teller. But it may be worth while to name the "Ballad Book" compiled by the Irish poet,

Introduction

William Allingham, as a charming selection which has had a wide popularity. And no one can speak of the English and Scottish ballads without mentioning the greatest and most scholarly presentation of this body of literature—that edited by the late Francis James Child, Professor in Harvard University, which appeared from 1882 to 1898 in five large volumes. Every extant version of every ballad included in the collection may there be found. Of one ballad, “Mary Hamilton,” the number of different versions is twenty-eight. This is a book for scholars, and even in the reduced form edited by Helen Child Sargent and George L. Kittredge it remains a book for scholars. With young readers a well-chosen selection may for a time satisfy the interest in ballad poetry which this volume may be expected to arouse. In the end every true student will be led to the noble volumes edited by Child.

EDWARD DOWDEN.



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Initials, etc.

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A Book of Ballad Stories

Patient Griselda



RICH nobleman was once hunting in a forest when he happened to ride past a humble cottage where a maiden sat spinning. Although simply clad, she was so lovely, and as she worked

she sang with so sweet a voice, that she instantly won the Marquis's heart. The more he looked, the more he was charmed, for he had never seen so beautiful a damsel ; and, going up to her, he saluted her courteously :

“ God speed thee, fair mistress of this homely bower, where love and virtue dwell with sweet content !”

The maiden was as good and kind as she was beautiful. With gentle grace and modesty she bade him welcome, and as he and all his gentlemen were weary from the chase, she hastened to set before them the best fare that the humble cottage could provide.

The Marquis was so enchanted with her grace and

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beauty that he fell in love with her on the spot, and as he was always accustomed to do exactly as he chose, and no one ever thought of disputing his will, he determined to marry her.



“Fair maiden, tell me your name.”

“Fair maiden,” he said, “tell me, what is your name? I mean to make you my wife.”

“Griselda is my name,” she answered. “I am far from fitted for your rank, my lord. I am only a simple maiden, and my parents are very poor.”

“Nay, Grizel,” he said, “you are rich, for you are

Patient Griselda

good and beautiful. Grant me your love, and I will ask no more."

Griselda was of too loving and gentle a nature to resist such a gallant suitor very long, and the wedding speedily took place. Her country russet gown was now changed to silk and velvet, in keeping with her state ; and when she was thus richly attired, her beauty was so dazzling that it quite dimmed every other fair and princely dame who appeared in her sight. For this reason, and because she was of poor parents, many were envious of her, and they tried to bring mischief between her and her husband. Some said one thing and some said another, and some called her "a beggar's brat," and would often speak in dispraise of her.

"Oh, noble Marquis," they said, "why have you done this wrong to us, to have wedded so basely, when you might have married some lady of high rank ? When you have any children they will be laughed at and held in scorn because their mother is of low birth. Send her quite away, therefore, and take some rich lady, who will add renown to your race."

Thus every day they talked in this mischievous manner, and Griselda, who knew of their malice and ill-will, all this time bore it most patiently.

When the Marquis saw that all his people were thus bent against his faithful wife, whom he loved most tenderly, he resolved to put her to a hard test to prove her loyal heart, and so disgrace her foes, for he thought that if he seemed to show her harshness and discourtesy, perhaps the people would pity her.

It happened at last that Griselda had two beautiful

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children—twins—a dear little son and daughter. The father and mother were full of joy. At the children's christening a royal feast was made with great pomp and rejoicing; for six whole weeks all nobles who came to the Marquis's palace were lodged and entertained.

But when these grand festivities were over, the Marquis determined to carry out his plan to show the wonderful sweetness and patience of Griselda's nature. He sent a messenger to fetch his dear little son and daughter, and the messenger was to declare that the children must be killed, for so the Marquis had decreed.

"Come, let me have the children," said the messenger, with pretended sternness.

At that Griselda wept sorely, and wrung her hands, but all she said was :

"My gracious lord must have his will obeyed."

She took the little babes from the attendant ladies into her own arms, and kissed them sorrowfully.

"Farewell—a thousand times farewell, my little children! I shall never see you again. It is because of me, your woeful mother, that you must be slain. Had I been born of royal race you might have lived happily, but you must die because of my unworthiness. Come, messenger of death," she said, "take my dearest babes, and tell their father of my sorrow."

The messenger took the children, and bore them with all speed to his master, who secretly sent them to a noble lady to be well brought up.

After his orders had been carried out, the Marquis went with a heavy heart to Griselda, where she sat meekly

Patient Griselda

alone. She showed no anger nor resentment, but looked as gracious and lovely as ever.

“My children are slain,” said the Marquis. “What does fair Griselda think of that? Sweet Griselda, now declare your mind to me.”

“Since you, my lord, are pleased with it, poor Griselda thinks it well. Both I and mine are at your command.”

“My nobles murmur at the honours conferred on you, Griselda, and I can have no joy until you are banished from my court and presence, as they unjustly crave. You must be stripped of all your stately garments, and as you came to me in homely grey, so must your clothing now be, instead of silk and rich purple robes. You must no longer be my lady, which grieves me full sorely, nor I your lord. The poorest life must now content you. I must not give you anything; I find the enmity against you is so great.”

When gentle Griselda heard these tidings the tears stood in her eyes, but she answered nothing, and no thought of discontent rose in her heart. She patiently took off her velvet robe and silken kirtle, and her russet gown was brought again to her with many a scoff. When she was dressed in this array and ready to depart—

“God send long life unto my lord,” said she. “Let no offence be found in this—to give my love a parting kiss.”

“Farewell, my dear,” said the Marquis. His eyes were full of tears, but he did not falter in his resolve, for he wished to show to all the world the wonderful sweetness and patience of Griselda.

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Poor Griselda went from princely palace to her father's cottage, and there for sixteen years she lived contentedly, never brooding over her wrongs. At the end of that time tidings ran through all the land that the Marquis was going to be married again, this time to a great and noble lady of high descent ; and all parties in the State approved of it.

Griselda was now to be put to one last test. The Marquis sent for her to prepare the guest-chamber for the bride, that nothing might be found amiss. The bride arrived with her young brother, and everyone made loud rejoicing ; but Griselda took it all most patiently.

In the morning when the wedding was to be Griselda was asked to attire the bride, to which she willingly consented, and the beautiful young stranger was decked in all her bravery. Soon arrived the noble Marquis, and with him, at his request, came all his lords.

"Griselda," he said, "I wish to ask of you if you will agree to this match ? It seems to me you look a little sad."

And all the nobles turned and smiled at each other with malicious pleasure.

"God send my lord Marquis many years of joy," replied Griselda.

The Marquis was touched to see his beloved wife thus patient in distress. He stepped to her, and took her by the hand.

"You are my bride, and all the bride I mean to have!" he said. "These two are your son and daughter." And at these words the young maiden and

Patient Griselda

her brother knelt before their mother, and craved her blessing.

“As for you who envied her estate,” continued the Marquis to his nobles, “now blush for shame and honour virtuous living! The chronicles of lasting fame shall evermore extol the name of Patient Griselda, my most constant wife!”

The Three Gallant Outlaws

William of Cloudesly



HERE were three good yeomen in the North Country in the reign of King Henry II., and they were called Adam Bell, "Clym-of-the-Clough" (which means "Clement of the Glen"), and William of Cloudesly. These three were outlawed for hunting the King's deer, so they swore to be faithful comrades one to another, and they fled together for refuge to the forest of Inglewood, which is in Cumberland.

Now, two of these outlaws were single men, but the third, William of Cloudesly, was married, and one day he said to his comrades that he must go to Carlisle to speak with Alice, his wife, and his three children.

His two friends tried to persuade him not to go, for they knew the danger he was running. Hunting the King's deer was then an offence most severely punished, and the outlaw, if taken, would be put to death.

The Three Gallant Outlaws

"If you go to Carlisle, and the justices get hold of you," said Adam Bell, "there will be an end of your life."

"If I do not come back to you by nine o'clock to-morrow morning," said William of Cloudesly, "you may trust I am taken or slain."

He bade good-bye to his two comrades and went to Carlisle, and there he tapped lightly and quickly at the window of his own house.

"Where are you, Alice my wife, and my children?" he said softly. "Hasten and let in your husband, William of Cloudesly."

Alice was half terrified to see her husband, for she told him that the place had been closely beset for over six months in the hope of catching him. However, he bade her fetch meat and drink, and strive to be of good cheer, now that he was there; and, like a good true wife, Alice hastened to set before him the best of all she had, for she loved him better than her life.

Now, near the fire lay an old woman, whom, out of charity, William had supported for more than seven years. While the husband and wife were talking, the ungrateful old creature rose up stealthily and crept out of the house. No one noticed her, for she had not set foot to the ground during the whole seven years. Away she hobbled as fast as she could to the justice hall, eager to do her evil deed.

"This night William of Cloudesly has come to town," she croaked.

The Justice was delighted to hear the news, and so also was the Sheriff.

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"You shall not have your trouble for nothing, dame; you shall have your reward before you go," they said, and they gave her a right good gown of scarlet.

She took the gift and crept back into the house again, and lay down in her place near the chimney-corner, and no one noticed that she had ever left it.

Then the Justice and the Sheriff roused up the town of Carlisle, and came thronging to William's house as fast as they could. The good yeoman was beset on every side. William heard the uproar of people flocking to the house, and Alice opened a back window and saw the Justice and the Sheriff followed by a great crowd.

"Treason! Treason!" cried Alice. "Go into my room, dear husband!"

Seizing his sword, buckler, and bow, William took the three children and went into the strongest chamber, where he thought they would be the most secure. His brave wife followed, with a poleaxe in her hand.

"He shall be dead who comes in at this door while I stand here," she said.

Cloudesly bent his trusty bow, which was made of a right good tree. He smote the Justice on the breast so that the arrow split into three pieces.

"A curse on thy coat!" cried William. "If it had been no better than mine, the arrow would have gone through to the bone."

"Yield thee, Cloudesly, and throw down thy bow and arrows!" cried the Justice.

"Woe to him who counsels my husband thus!" cried Alice.

The Three Gallant Outlaws

“Set fire to the house, since there is no better way,” said the Sheriff, “and therein we will burn William, his wife, and his children.”

The Sheriff’s men set light to the house in several places ; the fire rose rapidly.

“Alas, alas !” cried Alice, “I see we shall die here !”

Then William opened a back window, which was high above the ground. He took some sheets and tied them together, and let down his wife and three children.

“Here have my treasure,” he cried—“my wife and my children ! For the love of Christ do them no harm, but wreak all your vengeance on me !”

Then Alice and the children were allowed to go in safety, but the crowd gathered closely round the house. William shot arrow after arrow, so that all were soon gone. The fire was now so close upon him that his bow-string was burnt, and showers of sparks fell and scorched him.

“This is a coward’s death !” he cried. “I would rather die fighting, sword in hand, than burn thus cruelly.” Seizing his sword and buckler, he ran out into the crowd where the press was thickest. He ran on them so fiercely that no one could withstand his strokes, and he smote down many ; but the people hurled down on him windows and doors, and so he was overcome. Then they bound the gallant yeoman hand and foot and cast him into a deep dungeon.

“Now, Cloudesly,” said the Justice, “thou shalt be hanged in haste.”

“I will have a pair of new gallows made for thee,” said the Sheriff, “and the gates of Carlisle shall be shut,

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and no man shall come into the town. Then Clym-of-the-Clough shall not help thee, nor yet Adam Bell, though they came with a thousand fiends."

Early next morning the Justice rose, and first he went to all the gates of Carlisle, and commanded that every one of them should be at once shut tight. Then, as fast as he could hie, he hurried to the market-place, and set up a pair of new gallows beside the pillory.

A little boy among the crowd asked what was the meaning of the gallows, and he was told that it was to hang a brave yeoman, William of Cloudesly.

The little boy was the swineherd of the town, and, among the others, he had tended the swine of Alice, and had often seen Cloudesly in the forest and carried food to him. Now he crept out from the town, through a crevice in the wall, and ran quickly to the trysting-place in the forest, where he found Cloudesly's two comrades.

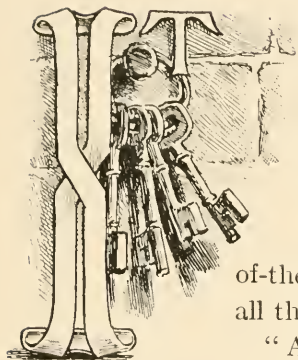
"Alas, you tarry here too long!" cried the little boy. "Cloudesly is taken, and is doomed to death, and is just going to be hanged!"

"Ah, that ever we saw this day!" cried Adam Bell. "He had better have tarried here, safe in the greenwood, and dwelt in peace under the shade of the trees."

They gave a great hart to the good little swineherd who had come to warn them, and then Adam Bell and Clym-of-the-Clough set out to Carlisle to rescue their comrade, however dear it might cost them.

The Three Gallant Outlaws

In Merry Carlisle



WAS a lovely morning in May, and the air was still full of the dewy sweetness of dawn; the trees were clad in their freshest green, and birds were singing on every bough.

When Adam Bell and Clym-of-the-Clough got to Carlisle they found all the gates fast shut against them.

“Alas! these gates are shut so well we shall never be able to get in,” said Adam

“We will get in by cunning,” said Clym-of-the-Clough.
“Let us say we are messengers straight come from the King.”

“I have a written letter here,” said Adam. “Let us go craftily to work; we will say we have the King’s seal. I expect the porter is no scholar.”

Then Adam Bell beat fiercely on the gate; the porter marvelled who it could be, and hurried out.

“Who is there now? Who makes all this knocking?” he demanded.

“We are two messengers come straight from the King,” replied Clym-of-the-Clough.

“We have a letter, and we must take it to the Justice,” said Adam. “Let us in to do our message, that we may get back to the King.”

“No one may come in,” said the porter, “until a false thief is hanged—William of Cloudesly.”

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“And if we stand long outside it’s you that will be hanged like a thief,” cried Clym-of-the-Clough, pretending to get very angry. “Lo, here we have the King’s seal. What, clown, are you mad?”

The porter, who was unable to read, as Adam guessed, was afraid to dispute further, and thought this was really the case. He immediately uncovered his head, as was the custom on receiving a message from the King.

“Welcome is my lord’s seal,” he said, and he hastened to open the gates, an unlucky act for himself.

When the two yeomen were inside they seized the porter, took the keys from him, and thrust him into a deep dungeon.

“Now I am porter,” said Adam Bell. “See, brother, the keys are here; we can get out of the town whenever we wish. Now we will bend our bows, and go to the tower to deliver our dear brother, who lies there in misery.”

They made ready their bows, and saw that their strings were sound, and then they hurried to the market-place. There, as they looked, they saw in front of them a pair of new gallows, and the Justice who had judged William to be hanged, with a body of squires. And Cloudesly lay ready in a cart, fast bound hand and foot, with a strong rope round about his neck, all ready for the hanging.

The Justice called a lad to him, and, promising him that he should have Cloudesly’s clothes, he told him to take the measure of the yeoman, so as to dig his grave.

“I have seen as great a marvel,” said Cloudesly, “as

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that between now and nine o'clock he that maketh a grave for me may himself lie therein."

"You speak proudly," said the Justice. "I will hang you with my own hand."

Adam Bell and Clym-of-the-Clough heard this quite well as they stood there silently. Then Cloudesly cast his eyes around, and saw them at a corner of the market-place, with their good bows bent in their hands.

"I see comfort," thought Cloudesly. "I still hope to fare well. If only I had my hands free, right little would I care."

Then spoke good Adam Bell to Clym-of-the-Clough.

"Brother, take heed you mark the Justice well; lo, yonder you may see him! And I will shoot at the Sheriff."

Never was a better shot seen in merry Carlisle. The two yeomen loosed their arrows at the same moment; they feared no man. The one hit the Justice, the other the Sheriff. The people standing near fled when the Justice fell to the ground; the Sheriff fell beside him. Both were killed on the spot.

All the citizens took to flight; they dared no longer remain. Then the two outlaws quickly released Cloudesly where he lay bound with ropes. Springing on an officer of the town, William seized the axe from his hand, and smote down his enemies on every side.

"To-day let us live and die!" he cried to his comrades. "If ever you are in need, as I am now, the same you shall have from me."

They shot so well, and their strings were so trusty, that they kept the streets on every side, and the battle

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lasted long ; they fought together like true brethren, like bold and hardy men, and they brought many of their pursuers to the ground. But when their arrows were all gone, their foes pressed close upon them. Then they flung away their bows and drew their swords, and so they fought their way through the town.

By that time it was the middle of the day, and there were many wounded. The alarm-horn was blown in Carlisle, and the bells were rung backwards, and the women were wailing and wringing their hands. The Mayor of Carlisle had come forth, and a great crowd with him. The outlaws were in sore dread, for they stood in great peril of their lives. The Mayor came hurrying along at a great pace, with a poleaxe in his hand, and with him was many a strong man to take part in the struggle.

The Mayor smote at Cloudesly with his poleaxe, and burst his buckler in two.

“Treason !” shouted the citizens. “Keep the gates shut fast, that these traitors go not forth !”

But they strove in vain, for the outlaws had the key of the gate. They fought so manfully that they cut their way through the crowd and got safely out of the town ; and they had the gate shut and locked before the citizens could follow.

“Here, take your keys !” said Adam Bell. “I here forsake my office. And if you follow my counsel, you will make a new porter.”

He threw the keys of Carlisle at the heads of the citizens, and mockingly bade them thrive well, and the same to all who tried to prevent any good yeoman coming to comfort his wife.

The Three Gallant Outlaws

So Adam Bell, Clym-of-the-Clough, and William of Cloudesly went back to the greenwood, light of heart as a leaf on a tree ; they laughed and were merry, for their enemies were far behind. When they came to the forest of Inglewood, under the trysting-tree, there they found other good bows and plenty of arrows.

“ I would we were in merry Carlisle before that fine crew ! ” cried Adam Bell.

And they sat down and made good cheer, and ate and drank heartily.

How William shot for a Wager



THEY sat in the forest, they thought they heard a woman weeping, although they could not see her. Cloudesly walked a little way into the thicket, and there he found his wife Alice and his three children, lamenting sorely and very sad at heart because they thought

he had been slain. How rejoiced they were to meet altogether once more in safety !

That night they feasted merrily in the forest. When supper was over Cloudesly said to the others :

“ Let us go to the King and get a charter of peace. Alice shall wait here in the nunnery close by till we come back, and my two little sons shall stay with her. My

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eldest son shall go with me, for I am not afraid for him, and he shall bring back word how we fare."

So these three yeomen, with the little boy, who was seven years old, went off to London as fast as they could hie, till they reached the palace of King Henry II. And when they came to the courtyard at the palace gate they asked leave of no man, but went in boldly. They pressed fearlessly into the hall, and the porter called after them and began to chide.

"Pray, what do you want, you yeomen?" asked the Usher. "You may get us officers into blame. Where do you come from, good sirs?"

"Sir, we are outlaws of the forest, under a ban; and we have come hither to the King to get a charter of peace," said the three comrades.

And when they came before King Henry they knelt down, as was the law, without anyone preventing them, and each held up his hand.

"We beseech thee here, your Majesty, to grant us pardon," said they, "for we have slain your fat fallow deer in many places."

"What are your names?" said the King

"Adam Bell, Clym-of-the-Clough, and William of Cloudesly."

"Are you those thieves I have been told of?" said the King. "I vow that you shall be hanged, all three. You shall be slain without mercy, as I am King of this land."

And he commanded his officers to seize them fast.

There they took those good yeomen and made them all three prisoners.



"Cloudesly walked a little beside,
He looked under the greenwood lynde,
He was ware of his wife and children three,
Full woe in heart and mind."

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Adam Bell besought the King to grant them mercy. "Inasmuch as we came to you of our own free will, let us as freely depart, with such weapons as we have here until we are out of your precincts. And if we live a hundred years, we will ask no other grace of you."

"You speak proudly," said the King; "you shall be hanged, all three."

But the gentle Queen was touched with compassion for the three gallant outlaws.

"It were great pity to slay them," she said, "if there might be any pardon. My lord, when I first came to this land to be your wedded wife, you would readily have granted the first boon that I asked. And I have never asked anything from you until now. Therefore, good lord, grant it me."

"Now ask it, madam," said the King, "and it shall be granted."

"Then, my good lord, I beseech you, grant me these three yeomen."

"Madam, you might have asked a boon worth more than all these put together. You might have asked of me towers and towns, and parks and forests in plenty."

"But none so dear to me," she said.

"Since it is your desire," said the King, "your request shall be granted, but I would rather have given you three good market-towns."

The Queen was delighted, and thanked the King heartily. "I dare undertake for them that they will be true men. But, good my lord, speak some kind word to them, to cheer them."

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“I grant you pardon,” said the King. “Wash, fellows, and go to meat.”

They had not long been sitting at table when there came messengers from the north, bringing letters to the King. They came before the King, and knelt down.

“Lord, your officers greet you well, from Carlisle, in the north country.”

“How fareth my Justice?” said the King, “and also my Sheriff?”

“Sir, in good truth they are slain, and many an officer besides.”

“Who hath slain them? Tell me quickly.”

“Adam Bell, and Clym-of-the-Clough, and William of Cloudesly.”

“Alas! alas!” cried the King. “My heart is sore; I had rather a thousand pounds that I had known of this before. For I have granted them pardon. But if I had known of this before they should have been hanged all three.”

The King quickly opened the letter, and read it through, and there he found that these outlaws had slain many men; first the Justice and the Sheriff of Carlisle, and then all the men who had tried to seize them; they had broken into the King’s parks, and slain his deer and chosen the best of all; such dangerous outlaws as they walked not east or west.

When the King read this letter he was much vexed and grieved; he ordered the tables to be cleared, for he would eat no more, and he summoned his best archers to go with him to the butts.

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“I will see these fellows shoot who have wrought all this woe in the north,” he said.

The King’s horsemen got ready quickly, and the Queen’s archers also ; and the three gallant yeomen went with them.

They shot two or three times to test their hands, and no mark could stand against any of their shots.

Then spoke William of Cloudesly :

“I hold him no good archer at all who shooteth at butts so wide.”

“At what butt now would you shoot ?” asked one of the King’s men.

“At such a butt, sir,” he answered, “as men use in my country.”

William went into the field with his two comrades, and there they set up two hazel rods, with twenty score paces between them.

“I hold him an archer,” quoth Cloudesly, “who cleaveth yonder wand in two.”

“There is none such,” said the King. “No man could do that.”

“I shall try it, sir, before I go further,” said Cloudesly. And with an arrow he clave the wand in two.

“Thou art the best archer, forsooth, that ever I saw,” said the King.

“And yet for your love,” said William, “I will do more masterly than that. I have a little son, seven years old, he is full dear to me. I will tie him to a stake, here in full view of everyone. I will lay an apple on his head, and go six score paces from him, and I myself with a broad arrow will cleave the apple in two.”

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“Now, haste thee,” said the King, “but if thou dost not as thou hast said, thou shalt be hanged. If thou touch his head or his gown, that any man can see, by all the saints that are in heaven I will hang all three of you.”

“What I have promised,” said William, “I will never fail to perform.”

There before the King he drove a stake into the earth and bound his eldest son to it, and bade him stand still ; he turned the child’s face away from him, so that he should not start, and he placed an apple on his head. Six score paces were measured out, and thither Cloudesly went and took his stand. There he drew out a fair, broad arrow, which was stiff and strong, and he set it in his sturdy bow.

He prayed the people who were there that they would all stand quite still, for he that shooteth for such a wager needeth a steady hand. Many people prayed for Cloudesly, that his life might be saved, and when he made him ready to shoot, there was many a weeping eye.

Then swiftly the arrow sped to its mark, and the apple fell cleft in two.

“Now God forbid that thou shouldst shoot at me !” said the King. “I will give thee eighteenpence a day and thou shalt bear my bow, and I will make thee chief Ranger over all the north country.”

“And I will give thee seventeen pence a day,” said the Queen. “I will make thee a gentleman, and thy two comrades Yeomen of my Chamber, for they are comely to see. Your little son shall be my cup-bearer,

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and when he cometh to man's estate, he shall be better advanced. And, William, call me your wife," continued the Queen, "she shall be my chief gentlewoman to govern my nursery."

The yeomen were deeply grateful; they repented heartily for all they had done amiss, and they determined to lead better lives for the future.

So they came and dwelt with the King, and all three of them died good men.

King Henry II. and the Miller of Mansfield



OW King Henry would ride a-hunting in the fair green forest, to see the harts skipping, and the dainty does. So away to merry Sherwood went the nobles, with hawk and hound, and everything was made ready for the sport.

All a long summer's day rode the King pleasantly, with his princes and nobles, chasing the deer, till at last the dusk of evening forced them to turn homewards. Then, presently, the King found that, riding quickly, he had left all his lords behind. It was late at night, and he was lost in the wood.

Wandering thus wearily alone, up and down, he happened at last to meet with a rustic miller, and of him he asked the nearest way to Nottingham.

"Sir," quoth the miller, "I do not mean to jest, but I think what I think. You do not ride out of your way for nothing."

"Why, what do you think of me, passing judgment so hastily?" asked the King merrily.

King Henry and the Miller

"Good faith," said the miller, "I do not mean to flatter you. I guess you are but some gentleman thief. Stand back in the dark; do not alight, lest I instantly crack your knave's crown."

"You greatly wrong me," said the King. "I am a gentleman, and I lack nothing!"

"You have not a groat in your purse," retorted the miller. "All your inheritance is on your back."

"I have gold to pay for everything I order," said the King. "If it be for a pence, I can pay it all."

"If you are really a true man, I will lodge you for the night," said the miller.

"I was ever that," said the King. "Here is my hand."

"Nay, soft," quoth the miller; "you may be a sprite. I will know you better before we shake hands. With none but honest men will I shake hands."

So they went along to the miller's house, where there were puddings bubbling and steaming on the fire. The miller went in first, and after him went the King. He had never been in so smoky a house.

"Now," said the miller, "let me see here what you are."

"Look your fill; do not spare," answered the King.

"I like your countenance well; you have an honest face. You shall share my son Richard's bed to-night."

"By my troth, it is a handsome youth," said the miller's wife. "Yet it is best, husband, to deal warily. Are you no runaway, prithee, youth? Show me your passport, and all will be well."

The King, making a low bow, with his hat in his hand, answered at once he had no passport. He had never

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been a servitor. He was a poor courtier, who had ridden out of his way. For the kindness they offered him he would requite them.

Then the miller's wife whispered secretly to her husband :

"It seems this youth is of good kin, both by his apparel and his good manners. It would be very wrong to turn him out."

"Yes," agreed the miller ; "you may see he has some good in him by the way he speaks to his betters."

"Well, young man," said the miller's wife, "you are welcome here, and though I say it, you shall be well lodged. I will have fresh straw laid on your bed, and good brown hempen sheets."

"Aye," put in the miller, "and when that is done you shall sleep with no worse than our own son."

But before Richard, the son, would agree to this, he carefully inquired if the guest were sure he was quite clean, and had nothing the matter with him. For, he said, unless this were so, he certainly should not sleep with him. This caused the King to laugh so heartily that the tears ran down his cheeks.

Then they sat down to supper, with hot bag-puddings and good apple-pies, and nappy old ale in a brown bowl ; and they were all very merry, and drank to each other's good health.

"Wife, fetch me forth light-foot, and we'll taste a little of his sweetness," said the miller presently. Whereupon the good dame quickly brought out a fine venison pasty. "Eat, sir," said the miller, "but waste none of it. Here's dainty light-foot !"



"Art thou no runaway, prithee, youth, tell?
Show me thy passport and all shall be well."

King Henry and the Miller

"Faith," said King Henry "I never ate before so dainty a thing!"

"Why, I trow it is no dainty at all," said Richard, "for we eat of it every day."

"In what place may it be bought like this?" asked the King.

"We never pay a penny for it," answered Richard. "From merry Sherwood we fetch it home. Now and then we make bold with the King's deer."

"Then I think," said the King, "that this is venison?"

"Every fool may know that full well," quoth Richard. "We are never without two or three in the roof, very well fleshed and excellent fat. But, prithee, say nothing wherever you go. We would not, for two pence, that the King should know of it."

"Doubt not my secrecy," said King Henry. "I promise you the King shall never know of it from me."

So they feasted right merrily, and after drinking the King's health in a cup of lamb's wool (ale and roasted apples), they went to bed.

The next morning King Henry's nobles rode up and down, seeking their master in every town and village, and at last they came to the miller's cot. At the very moment they came up, the King was just mounting his horse, and down they went on their knees to salute him.

The miller was quite terrified to discover who his guest really was; his heart sank, and he began to quake and tremble, thinking he would certainly be hanged. The King, seeing this, drew out his sword, but said nothing. Then the miller fell down, crying before them all, expecting the King to cut off his head.

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But King Henry, to requite him for his kindness, dubbed him a knight, and gave him a handsome reward.

When the King had left Nottingham, and was home again with his nobles at Westminster, in talking over all the sports and pastimes they had had in their late expedition, he protested that, of all his adventures, great and small, the sport he had had with the miller of Mansfield had pleased him the best.

“And now, my lords,” quoth the King, “I am determined that at the next sumptuous feast of St. George this old miller, our newly-made knight, with his son Richard, shall here be my guests. For at this festival it is my wish to talk with the jolly knight and the young squire.”

The noble lords were much pleased with the King’s gracious words; a pursuivant, who had often been in those parts, was immediately despatched on the business. Entering the place where the miller and his family dwelt, he delivered his message in proper form.

“God save your worship,” said the messenger, “and grant your lady her own heart’s desire! And to your son Richard, that gentle and gallant young squire, good fortune and happiness! Our King greets you well, and thus he says: You must come to the court on St. George’s Day. Therefore do not fail to be in place.”

The miller was more troubled than pleased at this invitation.

“I think this is an odd jest,” he said uneasily. “What should we do at court? Faith, I am half afraid.”

“I expect to be hanged, at the least,” said Richard.

King Henry and the Miller

"Nay, you mistake," said the messenger. "The King is providing a great feast for you."

"By my troth, messenger, thou hast contented my worship right well," said the miller in a lordly way. "Hold, here are three farthings, to reward thy courtesy for the good tidings thou hast brought. Listen! Tell the King we will in everything wait on his mastership."

The pursuivant smiled at their simplicity, and making many bows accepted their reward. Then taking his leave with great humility, he went back to court, showing the King merrily the knight's liberal gift and bounty.

No sooner had he gone than the miller began to fuss about in great excitement.

"Here, indeed, come expenses and charges!" he exclaimed. "Now we must needs be fine, even if we spend all we have, for we are greatly in want of new garments. We must have good store of horses and serving-men, with saddles and bridles and twenty other things."

"Tush, Sir John," said his wife, "why should you fret? You shall never be put to any charges for me, for I will turn and trim up my old russet gown, with everything else as fine as possible. And we will ride on our good mill-horses, with pillows and panniers."

In this stately fashion they rode to court. First of all went their handsome son, Richard. For good luck he had set a cock's feather in his cap, and thus they strutted down to the King's hall, the merry old miller with his hand on his hip, and his wife mincing along with short steps beside him.

The King and his nobles heard of their coming and went

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forward to meet them and gave them a kind and hearty greeting.

"Welcome, sir knight, with your fair lady!" quoth the King. "Good Sir John Cockle, welcome again!"

And he took them both by the hand, while the miller's wife dropped a milkmaid's curtsey at every word.

Then down sat all the folk at table and feasted right merrily. When they were well eaten, the King began to jest, and drank the guests' healths in a bowl of wine.

"Here's to you both!" he cried, "and thank you heartily for the good cheer you gave me that night in the forest. That puts me in mind of something," he added slyly. "I would we had here some of your famous 'lightfoot,' Sir John!"

"Hullo," said Richard, "I must say it is knavery to eat it, and then to betray it!"

"Why are you angry?" said King Henry merrily. "In faith, I take it very unkind of you. I thought you would pledge me heartily in ale and wine."

"You will have to wait until I have dined," returned Richard bluntly. "You feed us with such small twaddling dishes. A good black pudding is better than all of them."

"Aye, marry," said the King, "that were a dainty dish if a man could but get one here to eat."

With that Dick straightway rose, and pulled one out of his pocket, which had got somewhat greasy and battered from the long journey. The King pretended to snatch it away, telling him it was "meat for his master," and so with much good humour and merriment the meal went on.

King Henry and the Miller

After dinner the ladies appeared to dance, and the King immediately made old Sir John Cockle and Richard take their places, where they performed such funny antics that the nobles laughed until their sides ached. By and by the King asked Richard if he would not like to marry, and if so, which one of the ladies pleased him the best. But Richard answered that "Jugg Grumball with the red head," who lived near the mill, was the only one he loved, and she was the one he would marry.

Finally, King Henry called the miller to him, and made him overseer of Sherwood Forest, and said he should have three hundred pounds yearly.

"Take heed, now, you steal no more of my deer," ended the King. "And once a quarter let us see you here at court. And now, Sir John Cockle, I bid you adieu."

The Marriage of Sir Gawaine

A Legend of the Days of King Arthur



KING ARTHUR held his court in merry Carlisle, and there with him was his beautiful bride, Queen Guinevere, and all his stalwart barons. The King was keeping Christmas royally, with mirth and Christmas cheer, and many valiant knights from far and wide repaired to his court. As they sat at dinner, and the wine cups went freely round, there came a fair damsel and knelt before the King.

“A boon, a boon, O King Arthur!” she cried. “Avenge me of a churlish knight who hath wronged my love and me. Near the lake of Tearn-Wadling stands his castle, and proudly rise the battlements, with banners floating in the air. No gentle knight or fair lady passes that castle’s wall without some mishap befalling them from that bad, discourteous knight. He is twice the size of common men, with strong thighs and sinews, and he carries a huge club. This grim baron it was our hard

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fate to see only yesterday, when he carried my love to his castle, and sorely mistreated me. And when I told him that King Arthur would as little spare him, 'Go, tell that recreant King,' he said, 'to meet me if he dare!'

Up then sprang King Arthur, and swore a solemn vow that he would never quit that grim baron until he had made him quail.

"Go, fetch my sword Excalibur! Go, fetch my steed!" commanded the King. "Now, by my faith, this baron shall rue his cruel deed!"

When King Arthur came to Tearn-Wadling, beneath the castle battlements, he called with a loud voice:

"Come forth, come forth, thou proud baron, or yield thyself my thrall!"

But that castle stood on magic ground, and was fenced about with many a spell; no valiant knight could tread there but straightway he lost courage. So when the churlish baron rushed forth, King Arthur was overcome by the evil magic; his sturdy sinews lost their strength, and down sank his feeble arm.

"Now yield thee, King Arthur, yield thee to me!" said the baron. "Either fight with me or lose thy lands. No better terms shalt thou have unless thou swear a solemn oath to return here, to Tearn-Wadling, on New Year's Day, and bring me word what thing it is all women most desire. This is thy ransom, Arthur; I will have no other."

King Arthur held up his hand, and swore to do this. Then he took leave of the baron, and rode quickly away.

He rode east and he rode west, and everyone he met he asked what thing it is that all women crave and desire.

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Some told him riches, pomp, or state ; some, fine and gay raiment ; some told him mirth ; some, flattery ; and some, a handsome knight. King Arthur wrote down with care letters of all this, and sealed them with his ring ; but still his mind was in doubt, for everyone had told him something different.

One day, as he was ruefully riding over a moor, he saw a lady all clad in scarlet sitting between an oak and a green holly. She was a very ugly lady. Her nose was crooked and turned outwards, her chin stood all awry, and where her mouth should have been, lo, there were her eyes ! Her hair, like serpents, clung about her leaden-tinted cheeks, and no uglier shaped lady could ever have been seen.

This lady hailed King Arthur in courteous fashion, but the King was so amazed at the sight of her that he made no answer.

“What wight art thou that wilt not speak to me ?” said the lady. “Sir, I may chance to ease thy pain, although I am so ugly to see.”

“If thou wilt ease my pain, and help me in my need,” said the King, “ask me what thou wilt, thou grim lady, and it shall be thy reward.”

“Swear me this, and promise on thy faith, and I will tell thee here the secret that shall pay thy ransom.”

King Arthur promised, and then the lady told him the secret—what is is all women most desire—as she well could do.

“Now this shall be my pay and my guerdon, Sir King, that you shall bring here to marry me some young, fair, and courtly knight.”



“To hail the King in seemly sort
This lady was full fain;
But King Arthur, all sore amazed,
No answer made again.”

The Marriage of Sir Gawaine

Away then spurred King Arthur, over hill and dale and down, and he soon came to the castle by the lake, and found the grim baron.

The baron carried his club on his back, and stood up very stiff and strong. He read the letters in which King Arthur had written down all the different things he had been told that women most desired, and then he flung them away.

"Now yield, King Arthur! Thy lands are all forfeit to me; for none of these answers can be thy ransom."

"I pray thee, hold a while, proud baron, and give me leave to speak once more in rescue of my land," said the King. "This morning, as I came over a moor, I saw a lady clad all in scarlet sitting between an oak and a green holly. She says all women will have their own will, this is their chief desire. Now yield that I have paid my ransom, as thou art a true baron!"

"A speedy vengeance light on her!" swore the churlish baron. "She was my sister who told you this, and she is a hideous hag. But here I swear a vow to do her as ill a turn. For if ever I get hold of that ugly wretch I will burn her in a fire."

Homewards spurred King Arthur, and he was weary and sad at heart. It was not long before he met Queen Guinevere, his beautiful bride.

"What news? What news? How hast thou sped, Arthur?" cried the Queen. "Where hast thou hanged that churlish knight, and where bestowed his body?"

"The churlish knight is safe as far as I am concerned, and free from mortal harm," returned the King. "His

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castle stands on magic ground, and is fenced about with many a spell. I was forced to yield to him, and but for a loathly lady I should have lost my land. And now this fills my heart with woe—I have promised that a young and courtly knight shall marry her.”

Then up spoke Sir Gawaine, who was ever a gentle knight.

“Sir, I will marry that loathly lady, therefore be merry and glad of heart.”

“Nay now, my good Gawaine, thou art my sister’s son,” said the King. “This loathly dame is quite too grim and horrible for thee. Her nose is crooked, her chin is all awry, an uglier lady was never seen.”

“What though her chin stands all awry and she be hideous to see, I will marry her, uncle, for thy sake, and I will be thy ransom,” said the gallant young knight.

Then the King thanked the good Sir Gawaine with all his heart.

“A blessing betide thee !” he cried. “To-morrow we will have knights and squires, and go to fetch home thy bride ; and we will have hawks and hounds to cover our intent, and we will away to the greenwood as if we were going a-hunting.”

So all the knights of King Arthur’s court rode forth to the fresh green forest—Sir Lancelot and Sir Stephen and the steward, Sir Kay ; and Sir Bois and Sir Gareth, and the noble knight Sir Tristram.

And when they came to the forest, there, beneath a fair holly-tree, sat the lady clad in scarlet who was so uncomely to see. Sir Kay, when he saw her face, began to jest rudely about her ugliness, for he was ever ill-

The Marriage of Sir Gawaine

natured and unmannerly; and he said he would be a bold knight who ever dared to kiss her.

"Peace, brother Kay, and amend thy speech," said Sir Gawaine, "for there is a knight amongst us who must wed her."

"What, marry that hideous thing?" quoth Kay. "Get me a wife wherever I may, in sooth she shall be none of mine."

Then some took their hawks in haste, and some called to their hounds, saying they would not marry her, not for wealth or land. But up spoke King Arthur, and swore that for a little ugliness or dislike they should not say her nay.

"Peace, lordlings, peace, nor make further debate and strife," said Gawaine. "I will take this lady and marry her."

"Thanks, good Gawaine, and a blessing be thy reward!" said the lady. "For, as I am thine own lady, thou wilt never rue the deed."

So they brought home the ugly dame at once, and there Sir Gawaine wedded her. And when they were really married and the guests had gone away and left them alone together, the lady begged her husband to turn and look at her.

Sir Gawaine was so sad and heavy-hearted that he could scarcely turn his head, but when he slowly lifted his eyes, lo, instead of the hideous dame, he saw a young and beautiful maiden! Sweet blushes tinged her ruddy cheeks, her eyes were black as a sloe, her lips were like ripening cherries, and all her neck was snow-white.

Sir Gawaine kissed the beautiful lady, and never was

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kiss so sweet ; but he could scarcely believe this was the same lady he had wedded.

“ The fairest flower is not so fair !” he said. “ Thou never canst be my bride ?”

“ I am thy bride, my own dear lord ; the same whom thou knowest, the one who was so loathly, and who was wont to go on the wild moor. Now, gentle Gawaine, choose,” quoth she, “ and make thy choice with care. Shall I be beautiful or hideous by night or by day ?”

“ I had far rather that my dear lady should be ugly by day than by night when I am with thee alone,” said Sir Gawaine.

“ What, when happy ladies go with their lords to feast and make merry, alas, then must I hide myself ? I must not go with mine because I am to be so ugly !” said the lady sadly.

And once again the good and gentle heart of the brave young knight made him give up his own wish for the sake of another.

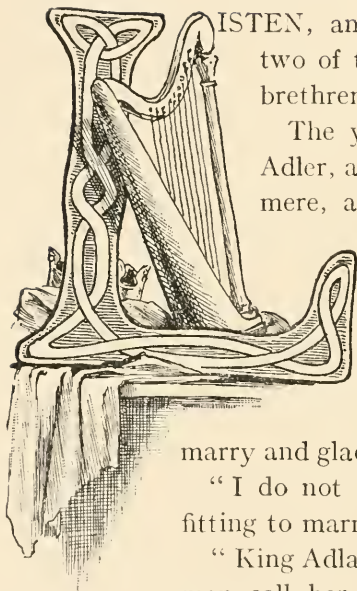
“ My fair lady,” said Sir Gawaine, “ I yield me to thy wish. Because thou art mine own lady thou shalt have all thy will.”

“ Now, blessed be thou, sweet Gawaine, and the day that ever I saw thee !” said the lady. “ For as thou seest me at this time so shall I ever be. My father was an aged knight, and it chanced he took to wife a false lady, who brought me to this woe. She bewitched me, being then a fair young maid, to dwell in the green forest, and there to abide in hideous shape, more like a fiend than a mortal ; and amid moors and mosses, woods and wilds, to lead a lonesome life until some handsome,

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young, and courtly knight would take me for his bride. Nor was I fully to gain my own true shape until he would yield to be ruled by me and let me have all my will. She also bewitched my brother into a churlish boor, and made him strong and huge, and built him a castle on magic ground, to live by rapine and wrong. But now the spell is broken and wrong has been turned to right. Henceforth he shall be a gentle knight, and I shall be a fair lady."

King Estmere



LISTEN, and you shall hear a tale of two of the boldest and most valiant brethren that were ever born.

The youngest brother was called Adler, and the elder was called Estmere, and Estmere was a King of England many hundred years ago.

One day, when they were feasting in King Estmere's palace, Adler asked his brother when he meant to marry and gladden the hearts of his people.

"I do not know any lady in any land fitting to marry," replied King Estmere.

"King Adland hath a daughter, brother; men call her very beautiful," said Adler.

"If I were King here in your stead, that lady should be my Queen."

"Counsel me, dear brother," said King Estmere. "Where shall we find a messenger to send to the lady?"

"You shall ride yourself, brother, and I will bear you

King Estmere

company, for through false messengers many are deceived, and I fear lest we should be so."

So the two brothers made them ready to ride; their horses were gay with rich trappings, and their own garments were of shining cloth of gold.

When they came to the gate of the castle, they found King Adland standing there.

"Now, Christ save thee, good King Adland!" said King Estmere in greeting.

And King Adland replied:

"You are welcome King Estmere, right heartily welcome!"

"You have a daughter," said Adler; "men call her very beautiful. My brother would marry her, and make her Queen of England."

"Yesterday," replied King Adland, "came Sir Bremor, King of Spain, to woo my dear daughter, but she refused to wed him. I fear she will do the same to you."

"The King of Spain is a Saracen, an evil pagan," said King Estmere, for at that time Spain was under the dominion of the Moors. "It were pity that a gentle lady should marry a heathen. I pray you grant me to see your daughter before I go hence."

"Although it is seven years and more since my daughter was in hall," said King Adland, "yet for your sake she shall come down once to gladden my guests."

Down, therefore, came that fair maiden, with all her ladies richly clad, and fifty bold knights to bring them from bower to hall, and as many high-born squires to attend on them. The golden trappings on her head

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hung low down to her knee, and every ring on her small fingers shone with precious stones.

"God save you, my dear madam!" said King Estmere.

And the princess answered :

"You are welcome to me, King Estmere, right welcome! And if you love me as you say, so well and heartily, all that you wish shall be speedily done."

But King Adland spoke in haste.

"My daughter, I say nay. Remember well the King of Spain, what he said yesterday. He would pull down my halls and castles, and slay me. And I cannot blame him if he does, if I let his wife be taken away."

"Your castles and your towers, father, are strongly built," answered the princess, "and, therefore, we need not stand in dread of the King of Spain. I am not his wife, and never will be. Plight me your troth now, King Estmere, by heaven and your right hand, that you will marry me and make me Queen of your kingdom."

Then King Estmere plighted his troth by heaven and his right hand, that he would marry the princess, and make her Queen of his kingdom. And he took leave of the lady to go back to his own country, to fetch dukes and lords and knights, so that they might be married in fitting state.

King Estmere and his brother had not ridden a mile forth from the town when in came the King of Spain, with many a soldier and bold baron, to marry King Adland's daughter on the one day and to carry her home on the next.

The princess sent a messenger after King Estmere,

King Estmere

with all the speed that could be, to tell him that he must either turn back again and fight, or go home and lose his lady. Away went the page, sometimes he walked, and sometimes he ran, but he never stopped until he had overtaken King Estmere.

“Tidings, tidings, King Estmere!”

“What tidings now, my boy?”

“Tidings that will vex you sorely. You had not ridden a mile out of the town, when in came the King of Spain with soldiers and barons, to marry King Adland’s daughter on the one day and the next to carry her home. My fair lady, she greets you well by me; you must either turn again and fight, or go home and lose your lady.”

“Counsel me, counsel me, dear brother!” cried King Estmere. “Is it better to turn and fight the King of Spain and all his soldiers, or to go home and lose my lady?”

“Now, hearken to me,” said young Adler, “and thou must follow my counsel. I will quickly devise a way to set free thy lady. My mother was a woman from the west country and skilled in magic; and when I was a boy at school she taught me something of it. There grows a herb in this field, and, if it were only known, it has a magic spell—it has power to change the colour of any one who wears it. If he is white and red, it will make him black and brown; and if he is black and brown it will make him red and white; and there is not a sword in all England that shall pierce through his coat. You shall be a harper, brother, out of the North country, and I’ll be your boy, so fond of fighting, and carry your harp; and you shall be the best harper that ever took harp in

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hand, and I will be the best singer that ever sang in this country. It shall be written in our foreheads and in the book of magic that we two are the boldest men in all Christendom."

So they found and gathered the little herb, and then their yellow hair turned black, and their fair ruddy faces became brown. Their two good steeds were richly dight, and their own garments shone with red gold. Adler took a harp in his hand, and so they rode back to King Adland's palace

When King Estmere and his brother reached the palace gate they found a stalwart porter leaning up against it. The two wayfarers saluted him courteously, and the porter answered :

"Now are you welcome, of whatsoever land you be."

"We are harpers, come out of the North country," said young Adler. "We have come hither to this place to see this grand wedding."

"If your colour were white and red," said the porter, "instead of black and brown, as it is, I would say that King Estmere and his brother had come again to this town."

Then they pulled out a ring of gold, and laid it on the porter's arm.

"Thou wilt say no harm of us," said the King.

The porter looked long in doubt at King Estmere, and long in doubt he handled the ring ; then he opened the hall gates to them, and let them pass without hindrance.

King Estmere rode straight into the hall, and stabled his steed so close to the banqueting-board that the



“Then King Estmere pulled forth his harp
And played a pretty thing :
The lady started up from the board,
And would have gone from the King.”

King Estmere

foam from the bridle-bit flew on to the King of Spain's beard.

"Stable thy steed in the stall, proud harper!" cried King Bremor. "It doth not beseem a harper to stable his steed in a King's hall."

"My lad is so froward," said the harper, "he will do nothing that is meet; and is there any man in this hall able to beat him?"

"Thou speakest proud words to me, thou harper!" said the King of Spain. "There is a man in this hall who will beat both thy lad and thee."

"Oh, let that man come down, I would fain see him!" said King Estmere. "And when he hath well beaten my lad, then shall he beat me."

Down stepped a sturdy man-at-arms, and gave him a look askance. For all the gold under heaven he dared not go near him.

"How now, warrior?" said the pagan King. "What aileth thee?"

And the man answered:

"It is written in his forehead and in the book of magic that for all the gold under heaven I dare not go near him."

Then King Estmere pulled forth his harp and began to play; and as he played the music was so wondrous sweet that the princess started up from where she sat beside the King of Spain at the banquet, and would have gone to the harper.

"Stay thy harp, thou proud harper, for love of heaven!" cried the King; "for if thou play as thou hast begun thou wilt lure my bride from me."

King Estmere smote upon his harp again and played

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sweet music, and the lady laughed aloud as she sat beside the King.

“ Sell me thy harp, thou proud harper,” cried the King of Spain, “ and thou shalt have for it as many gold nobles as there be rings in this hall.”

“ What dost thou want to do with my harp if I sell it to thee ?”

“ To play a song to my wife when we are alone together.”

“ Now, sell me thy bride so gay as she sits by thy side,” said the harper, “ and I will give thee as many gold nobles as there be leaves on a tree.”

“ And what would thou do with my bride if I did sell her to thee ? It is more fitting that she should wed me than thee.”

King Estmere played again, both loud and shrill, and Adler, his brother, sang :

“ O lady, this is thine own true love,
No harper, but a King !

“ O lady, this is thine own true love,
As thou mayst plainly see ;
And I'll rid thee of that foul paynim
Who parts thy love and thee !”

The princess looked and blushed, and blushed and looked again ; and young Adler drew his sword and slew the pagan King.

Then up rose all the soldiers and began to shout in wrath :

“ Traitors ! Ye have slain our King, and therefore ye shall die !”

King Estmere

King Estmere threw aside his harp and swiftly drew his sword, and he and young Adler stood gallantly to face their foes ; and by the aid of the magic herb so sorely did their swords bite that soon they had slain all the pagan warriors, or forced them to flee.

Then King Estmere took that fair lady, the beautiful princess, and married her, and brought her home to merry England, to live the rest of their lives happily together.

The Young Tamlane



HERE Ettrick and Yarrow meet lies the plain of Carterhaugh, and here, in days of old, was a favourite haunt of the fairies. Many were the mischievous pranks they played, and prudent folk were cautious of venturing into their neighbourhood, and did their best to restrain reckless youngsters from lingering near the forbidden ground by telling them stories of the dangers that awaited them if they chanced to fall into the power of the fairies. Children were often stolen, little changelings put in the place of babies, and even grown-up mortals had been carried bodily away to fairyland. Here they were held captive, and the time that seemed to them but days was in reality years, so that, when allowed to re-visit the earth, they found those whom they had left young and vigorous old and feeble.

In the days of William Wallace the land of Carterhaugh was said to be haunted by an elfin knight of special renown and cunning. All maidens were bidden to shun the spot, for once the young Tamlane laid his spell on any maiden, she had to pay ransom with a gold ring or

The Young Tamlane

green mantle, or some other precious possession before she was set free.

But when word of this came to Janet, daughter of the lord of Newark Castle, the fairest maiden among all her kin, she spoke up in wrath.

“What care I for the young Tamlane? Carterhaugh is my own, my father gave it me. I’ll come and go to Carterhaugh, and ask no leave of young Tamlane.”

So she kilted up her green kirtle, and braided her yellow hair, and away she went to Carterhaugh. And there in a thicket of rose-bushes, beside a well, she found a steed standing, but there was no sign of any rider.

The Lady Janet began to gather some roses, but she had barely plucked three or four when up started a wee, wee man, no higher than her knee.

“Why are you plucking the roses, Janet?” he said. “What made you break off that branch? Why do you come to Carterhaugh without my leave?”

“Carterhaugh is my own,” she answered. “My father gave it me. I’ll come and go to Carterhaugh without asking leave of you.”

But in spite of her pride and courage so great was the magic power of the young Tamlane that he cast a strange spell over the Lady Janet. She went back pale and wan to her father’s castle, and from that hour she drooped and pined away. She cared no longer now to deck herself in brave attire, or to sport with the other maidens; once the gayest and merriest among them all, she was now the saddest and most languid. Nothing she took did her any good, and at last, unable to endure it any

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longer, she stole away again one night by moonlight to Carterhaugh to speak with the young Tamlane.

When she came to Carterhaugh she found the well, and the steed standing beside it, but Tamlane himself was not there.

She began plucking the roses, but she had barely plucked two when up started young Tamlane.

“Lady, pluck no more! Why do you gather the roses in this green garden, Janet? Is it to kill the love that has sprung up between us?”

“Oh, Tamlane, you must tell me the truth; you must not tell me a lie,” cried Janet. “Have you ever been in Church, and have you ever been hallowed by christening?”

“I’ll tell you the truth, Janet, and I will not lie to you. My father was a knight, and my mother a lady as high-born as your own. Randolph, Earl of Murray, was my father; Patrick of Dunbar, Earl of March, was yours. We loved each other when we were little children, as you may yet well remember. When I was a boy just nine years old my uncle sent for me to hunt and hawk and ride with him, and be his companion. One day out hunting we got parted from each other. There was a sharp, keen wind blowing from the north, and I got so numbed with the cold that I fell from my horse. As I lay on the ground in a deep sleep, the Queen of the fairies carried me away, and kept me to dwell in yonder green hill. And now I am a fairy like one of themselves. Look at me well, dear lady, and see how lithe and agile I am!

“We that live in fairyland know no pain nor sickness.



Says, "Why pull ye the rose, Janet?
What gars ye break the tree?
Or why come ye to Carterhaugh
Withouten leave o' me?"

The Young Tamlane

I quit my body and go back to it whenever I like. We can inhabit at our ease either the earth or the air. We can change our shapes and size to either small or great ; an old nut-shell is the same to us as is the lofty palace. We sleep in rose-buds soft and sweet, revel in the running water, frolic merrily on the wind, glide on a sunbeam. All our wants are well supplied from the stores of rich men who are thankless for the goods they possess, or have gained them by evil means, and vainly grasp for more.

“I should never tire, then, of dwelling in Elfin-land, Janet, were it not that every seven years they have to pay toll to hell, and I am so fat and fair of flesh I fear the next will be myself.

“This night is Hallowe’en, to-morrow is All Saint’s Day. If you dare to win your true love, Janet, you have no time to lose. This night is Hallowe’en, when fairy folk ride abroad ; those that would win their true love must wait at Mile Cross.”

“But how shall I know you, Tamlane ?” asked Janet. “How shall I know you amongst so many elfin knights whom I have never seen before ?”

“Listen,” said Tamlane. “The first company that passes by, say nothing, and let them go. The next company that passes, do the same, say nothing ; the third company that passes, I’ll be one of them.

“First let the black steed pass, then let the brown, but when the milk-white steed comes, grip hold of it and pull down the rider. For I always ride on the milk-white steed and nearest the town ; this honour they give me because I was a christened knight. My right hand

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will be gloved, and my left bare. These are the tokens I give you. Do not doubt I will be there.

“When you have seized me the fairies will change me in your arms to an adder, but you must hold me fast. You must not let me go if you would rescue me. They will turn me into a snake, and a newt, and a blazing faggot, and a goad of red-hot iron, but hold me fast, don’t let me go, for I will do you no harm, Janet. And next they will shape me into a fox, and an eel, and a dove, and a swan, but hold me fast if you love me well. And last of all they will change me into a mother-naked man; cast your green mantle over me, the spell will be broken, and I shall be myself again.”

Gloomy was the night and eerie the way as Janet in her green mantle went to Mile Cross. The heavens were black, the night dark, it was a wild and dreary spot, but Janet stood firm and unflinching, her heart filled with the eager desire to save her lover from the power of the fairies, and to win him back again to earth.

Betwixt the hours of twelve and one a north wind swept across the moor, tearing up the reeds and grasses, and straightway she heard strange, uncanny noises which went with the wind. Then in the dead hour of the night came the ring of bridles, and never had Janet been so glad of any earthly thing. Now the weird elfin music struck her ear, the oaten pipes that blew so shrill, the small hemlock with its clear note, and the louder piping from large hemlock and bog-reed. It was merry, tinkling music, for the fairies cannot bear solemn sounds or sober thoughts. They sing like skylarks in the air, inspired

The Young Tamlane

with love and joy, but no trace of sense or grave thought will ever be found among them.

With calm, steadfast mind Janet stood on the dreary heath ; louder and louder waxed the sound as the fairy calvacade drew near.

Will-o'-the-Wisp, who flitted before them, sent forth a twinkling light, and soon Janet saw the fairy bands come riding along. The first company that went by she let it pass, and spoke no word ; and the second company she also let pass.

Then up came the third company. And first the black steed went by, and she let it go ; and next the brown steed. But when the milk-white steed came by she gripped it tight and dragged down the rider. And as she caught him in her arms and let fall the bridle there rose an eldritch shriek :

“ He’s won away from us ! He’s won away ! ”

Then, as the young Tamlane had foretold, they changed his shape in Janet’s arms. They turned him into an adder, and a newt, and a blazing faggot, and a goad of red-hot iron, and a fox, and an eel, and a dove, and a swan. But Janet held him fast in every shape to win him back to earth.

And at last they shaped him in her arms a mother-naked man ; and then she flung over him her green mantle, and so the spell was broken, and Janet won her true love.

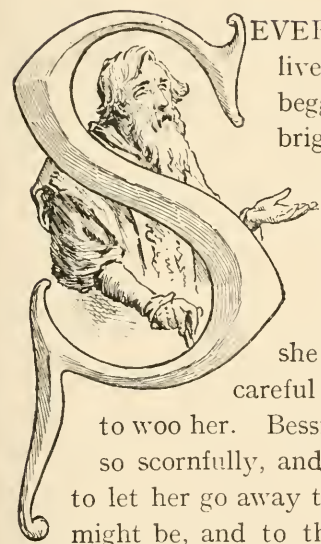
But the Queen of the fairies, who, from a bush near, had seen all that passed, was very angry at having her favourite knight snatched from her in this manner.

“ She that has borrowed young Tamlane has got a

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stately bridegroom," she cried in wrath. "She has taken away the bonniest knight of all my company! But if I had known, Tamlane," she went on, "that a lady would have borrowed you, I would have taken out your two grey eyes and put in two of wood. And had I but known, Tamlane, before you came from home, I would have taken out your heart of flesh and put in a heart of stone. Had I but had the wit last night that I have bought to-day I would have paid my toll seven times to hell before ever you had been won away from me!"

The Beggar's Daughter of Bethnal Green



SEVERAL hundred years ago there lived in Bethnal Green a blind beggar, who had a daughter so bright and charming that none of the other maidens could compare with her. Pretty Bessie had many brave and gallant suitors, but as she was the daughter of only a beggar, she was greatly despised by the careful housekeepers whose sons came to woo her. Bessie was very sad at being treated so scornfully, and begged her father and mother to let her go away to seek her fortune, whatever it might be, and to this her parents consented. So this maiden, whose beauty was so dazzling, put on a grey russet gown, and late one night she parted from her dear parents, and went out alone into the wide world.

With a heavy heart, and weeping over her sad lot, Bessie went on till she came to Stratford-at-Bow, and then she did not know which way to go. However, she

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went on walking till it was daylight, and journeying along the high-road at last she came to Rumford. Here there was an inn called "The King's Arms," and, so fair and well-favoured was Bessie, that she was made welcome at once, and allowed to remain. Before the end of the month all the people in the inn were her friends, and all the brave gallants who saw her fell straight-way in love with pretty Bessie. They sent her rich gifts of gold and silver, and sang songs in her praise, and the fame of her beauty was blazed abroad among people of all ranks. The young men of Rumford delighted in her; she was pleasant and courteous to all, not in the least spoilt by all the admiration lavished on her, but always ready to do a kind service to everyone.

At one time she had four suitors all begging her to marry them.

"No," she said, "I would not have any gentleman marry me." But still they kept pressing her.

One of them was a gallant young knight; the second a gentleman of high degree; the third a wealthy merchant of London; the fourth was the son of her master, the innkeeper.

"If you will marry me," quoth the knight, "I will make you a lady. My heart is enthralled by your beauty. Then grant me your favour, my pretty Bessie."

The gentleman said:

"Come, marry me, and you shall go richly clad in silks and in velvet. My heart is distracted! Oh, hear me, my dear, pretty Bessie, and grant me your love!"

"Let *me* be your husband," said the merchant. "You

The Beggar's Daughter

shall live in London so gallant and gay ; my ships shall bring home rich jewels for you ; and I will love you for ever, pretty Bessie."

Then Bessie sighed and spoke thus :

" I will obey my father and mother. Get their goodwill, and be faithful to me, and you shall have your wish."

To every one of them she made this answer.

" We all agree to this," they said joyfully. " But where does your father dwell ?"

" My father can easily be seen," she said. " He is the poor blind beggar of Bethnal Green, who sits daily begging for charity. His signs and token are well known ; he is always led by a dog with a bell. A poor, simple old man, Heaven knows, but he is truly my father."

" Nay, nay," quoth the merchant, " you are not for me."

" She shall not be my wife," said the innkeeper's son.

" I loathe beggars," said the gentleman, " therefore now, farewell, my pretty Bessie."

" Why then, come better or worse," quoth the knight, " I do not weigh true love by the weight of the purse ; beauty is beauty in whatever rank it is found. Then welcome, my dear pretty Bessie ! I will go with you at once to your father."

" Nay, forbear," said his kinsmen, " it must not be so. A poor beggar's daughter shall not be a lady, so say farewell to your pretty Bessie."

But the good knight did not intend to listen to the selfish advice of his worldly kinsfolk. As soon as it was

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break of day he and Bessie quietly left Rumford. The young men of the town, very angry, rode after them to fetch back Bessie. Swift as the wind they were seen riding until they came near Bethnal Green, and there the knight had to alight and fight against them to save Bessie. Happily rescue came quickly, for they were close to the dwelling of Bessie's father, or the knight would have been slain there for his love. But when they saw the fray was ended his kinsfolk began to rail at poor Bessie.

Then up spoke the blind beggar.

"Although I am poor, rail not against my child at my own door. Though she is not decked in velvet and pearl, I will lay down my money against yours for my daughter. And then if my gold betters her birth, and is equal to the gold you lay down, rail no longer, nor grudge to see the blind beggar's daughter a lady. But first let me hear and have it well known that the gold you set down is really yours."

"We are contented," they replied.

"Then here is for pretty Bessie," quoth the beggar. And he dropped on the ground a gold angel. The kinsmen of the knight in their turn dropped another, and so it went on until the blind beggar had put three thousand pounds; and often it was plainly seen that where the knight or his friends dropped one angel, the beggar threw down two, so that the whole place where they sat was covered every bit with gold.

The knight having dropped all his store, said :

"Beggar, hold your hand, for I have no more."

"You have rightly fulfilled your promise, so marry



“As swift as the wind to ride they were seen,
Until they came near unto Bethnal Green;
And as the knight lighted most courteously,
They all fought against him for pretty Bessie.”

The Beggar's Daughter

my child," said the beggar ; " and then I will give another hundred pounds to buy her a gown."

All the kinsfolk of the knight who had seen the treasures of the beggar now began to admire him ; and those who had been Bessie's suitors were furious with rage and envy.

Thus was the fair Bessie wedded to a knight, and made a lady, in spite of everyone, and never was seen a fairer lady than the blind beggar's daughter of Bethnal Green.

The marriage-feast took place in a splendid palace, adorned with the most costly magnificence. All kinds of dainties and delicacies were brought to this banquet—partridges, plovers, and venison in abundance. The report of the wedding spread all through England so that numbers thronged to it, nobles and gentles of every degree, and troops of fair ladies, the like of which had never been seen before.

After the wedding had been solemnized in church, and the sumptuous dinner was done, many of the guests began talking about the blind beggar, and what he had given with his daughter to the knight. Several of the nobles marvelled that they had not yet seen the blind beggar, but the bride answered that her father was loth to disgrace the feast with his presence because of his low estate.

" It is a flattering thing to praise a woman to her face," said the nobles, " but we think on this occasion the beauty of the bride might well make the rank of the father be forgotten."

They had no sooner spoken this pleasant speech than

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in came the beggar in a silken cloak, and a velvet cap with a feather. He was now a musician, it appeared, for when he was led in he had a dainty lute under his arm.

"If it please you to hear a little music," he said, "I will sing you a song of pretty Bessie."

With that he touched his lute and began to play thereon most sweetly, and, after a little prelude, he began to sing this strain very daintily.

"A Beggar's daughter did dwell on a Green,
Who for her beauty may well be a queen ;
A blithe, bonny lass, and dainty was she,
And many one called her pretty Bessee.

"Her father he had no goods and no lands,
But begged for a penny all days with his hands ;
And yet for her marriage gave thousands three,
Yet still he hath somewhat for pretty Bessee.

"And here if any one do her disdain,
Her father is ready with might and with main
To prove she is come of noble degree
Therefore let none flout at my pretty Bessee."

The lords and all the company were delighted with the song, and said gaily to the blind beggar :

"We can see full well that the bride and bridegroom are greatly beholden to thee."

With that the beautiful young bride rose, all blushing, and with tears in her bright eyes.

"Brave nobles, pardon my father, who dotes on me thus with blind affection," she said modestly.

"If this be thy father, he may well be proud of this happy day," they answered. "Yet by his countenance

The Beggar's Daughter

we can very well see that his birth does not agree wit' his present low condition. Therefore, blind beggar, reveal to us thy birth and parentage, and look that thou speakest the truth, for the love thou bearest pretty Bessie."

"Then give me leave, ye gentles, to sing one more song, and if it does not please you then do not give me a penny for my pains.

"Long ago, when our King first began to make himself a name, he went over into France to win glory, and in many places he endured great perils. But in those days pretty Bessie was not yet born.

"Many brave dukes, lords, and knights went over to fight in those wars, and among them went young Monford, so valiant and bold. But very soon, fighting in battle, young Monford got a blow which made him lose both his eyes. He would have lost his life also with his sight if it had not been for a young maiden who went out that night to search for her own true love among the poor wounded men on the battle-field. Seeing young Monford there, gasping, and at the point of death, she took compassion on him, and by her charity saved his life. Afterwards, when he was better, they had to beg their bread in poor attire, and so at last they made their way to England, and came to Bethnal Green, as you may see, where they remained.

"Thus have we lived in fortune's despite, although poor yet contented with our humble joys ; and in my old years God sent me as a comfort a daughter called pretty Bessie.

"Thus, ye nobles, I end my song, hoping that I have

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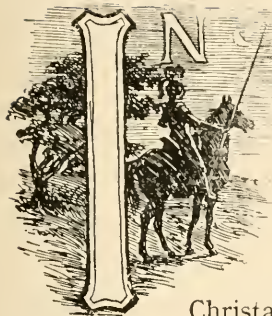
not offended any man by it. For full forty long winters have I been a simple blind beggar of Bethnal Green."

Now, when all the company had heard the strange tale he sang in his song, they were amazed, as well they might be, both at the blind beggar and at his pretty daughter. They all saluted the fair bride, saying :

" You are come of an honourable race, for your father is of high degree, and you are right worthy to be a lady."

Thus the feast ended with delight, and the young knight was made a happy bridegroom, who lived in great joy and felicity with his fair lady, " dear pretty Bessie."

Sir Cauline



IRELAND, far over the sea,
dwelt a noble King, and
at his Court there was a
young and comely knight,
whose name was Sir Cauline.

The King had one daughter,
peerless in beauty, and many a
princely suitor wooed the Lady

Christabel to be his wife. But Sir Cauline
loved her best of all, though he dared not say aught to
her nor take counsel of any man. He loved the maiden
so dearly that, knowing his suit must be of no avail, at
last he fell quite ill from despair. And as he lay tossing
restlessly in bed, he bewailed bitterly : “ Alas, unless I
win that lady’s love I must die of sorrow !”

Now, when the King was about to dine, he missed the
knight, and asked where he was, for Sir Cauline was
always wont to serve the wine. Then a courteous knight
answered the King, wringing his hands : “ Sir Cauline is
sick and like to die, without good doctoring.”

“ Fetch me down my dear daughter,” said the King
at once. “ She is a most skilful doctor. Go, take him
cakes and baken bread, and serve him with good red
wine. I should be very loth to lose him.”

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So the fair Lady Christabel, attended by her maidens, went to the knight's chamber.

"Well," she said, "how doth my lord?"

"Oh, sick, fair lady," answered Sir Cauline.

"Now rise up briskly, man, for shame. Never lie there so cowardly," spoke the Princess. "For it is told in my father's hall that you are dying for love of me."

"Fair lady, it is for your love I suffer all this pain," said the knight. "For if you would comfort me with a kiss, then all my sorrow would be changed to joy, and I would no longer lie here."

"Sir Knight, my father is a King; I am his only heir. Alas, you know well, Sir Knight, I can never be your wife."

"Oh, lady, thou art a King's daughter, and I am not thy peer," said Sir Cauline; "but let me do some deed of arms to be thy true knight."

"If thou wilt do some deed of arms to be my true knight, my heart would rue it for ever if any harm should happen to thee," replied the Princess. Then she went on: "On Eldritch Hill, on the broad and lonely moor, there grows a thorn. Dare you, Sir Cauline, watch there all night until the dawn? For the Eldritch Knight so great and strong will come and challenge you, and even if a man escape from him alive, it is never without scathe and scorn. That knight is a wicked pagan, huge of limb and bone, and unless heaven speed you, your life is doomed."

"Now, on the Eldritch Hill will I walk for thy sake, fair lady," declared Sir Cauline. "And I will either bring thee back a token, or I will never see thee more."

Sir Cauline

Then the Lady Christabel went back to her own chamber with her maidens, and Sir Cauline leaped from his bed, and hied in haste to the Eldritch Hill, there to watch all night.

Until midnight, when the moon rose, he rode up and down ; then he heard a shrill bugle blown over the withered bracken, and he thought to himself : “ If fear come to my heart, I am far from any good town.”

Then across the wide moorland he spied riding towards him a fierce and furious man. The bridle of his horse was led by a beautiful lady, clad in a rich kirtle. The pagan knight shouted at once to Sir Cauline :

“ Oh man, I counsel thee to flee, for unless terror overtake me, I think thou must die.”

“ Nay,” answered Sir Cauline, “ I have no fear, and in faith, I will not flee. And because thou hast not challenged me in the holy name, I dread thee still less.”

The Eldritch Knight pricked his steed ; Sir Cauline boldly waited. They levelled their trusty spears, and at the force of their encounter both weapons were split asunder. Then they drew their good swords, and laid on doughtily, till helm and hawberk, mail and shield, were all shattered. The pagan knight was mighty of strength, and stood firm in the fray ; but Sir Cauline with a backward stroke smote off his right hand, so that from pain and loss of blood he soon fell down on the greensward. Then Sir Cauline lifted his brand high over his head, and cried : “ I swear here by the holy rood, Sir Caitiff, thou shalt die !”

But the beautiful lady came running up, wringing her hands, and beseeching him :

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“For the maiden’s love that most you love, withhold that deadly brand! For the maiden’s love that most you love, I pray you smite no more! And henceforth, my lord, wherever thou wilt, this knight shall obey thy behest.”

“Now, swear to me, thou Eldritch Knight, here on this greensward,” said Sir Cauline, “that thou wilt believe on the law of Christ, and thereto plight thy hand. And that thou wilt never more come on the Eldritch Hills to sport or fight, and that thou here give up thine arms until thy dying day.”

The pagan warrior sadly gave up his arms, and swore to obey Sir Cauline’s behest as long as he lived. Then Sir Cauline helped him to rise, and set him again in his saddle, and the Eldritch Knight and his lady departed to their own castle.

Sir Cauline picked up the huge hand which he had smitten off, and on it he found five gold rings of knights who had been slain. And he took up the Eldritch sword, which was as hard as flint, and he took off the five rings which shone and glittered like fire. Then he spurred home as light of heart as a leaf on a tree. He never stopped nor slackened speed till he came to his own lady and knelt down at her feet.

“Oh, lady, I have been on the Eldritch Hills, and I have brought away these tokens.”

“Now welcome, welcome, Sir Cauline! Thrice welcome! For now I see thou art a true and valiant knight.”

“Oh, lady, I am thy own true knight, to obey thy bidding, and if I might hope to win thy love——” His tongue could say no more.

Sir Cauline

The lady blushed, and gave a gentle sigh.

“Alas, sir knight, how can that be, since I am a King’s daughter? But since thou art plighted to be my true knight, I will promise that if I may not wed thee, I will have no other husband.”

Then she held out her lily-white hand to the brave knight. He kissed it gently, and the sorrow in his heart turned to joy, while the tears started from his eyes.

“But keep my counsel, Sir Cauline,” added the Princess. “Let no man know it, for if ever my father should hear of it I think he would slay us.”

From that day forth that fair lady loved the knight, and from that day forth Sir Cauline knew no joy save when the Princess was in his sight. And often they met in a green arbour, where they spent many happy hours in sweet and loving converse.

But every white has its black, and every sweet its sour, and this the Lady Christabel proved in an untimely moment. For so it befell that one day, when Sir Cauline was with his lady in the bower, the King her father walked forth to take the evening air. And going into the arbour to rest his weary feet, he found there his daughter and Sir Cauline, sitting in pleasant converse.

The King started forward with rage.

“Now, traitor, thou shall be slain,” he cried, “and bitterly shall thy lady rue.”

Then Sir Cauline was led away and thrown into a deep dungeon, and the Lady Christabel was imprisoned in a high tower, and there left to wail and weep.

But the Queen was Sir Cauline’s friend, and she begged

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the King not to have the knight slain, but to banish him. At last the King consented to spare Sir Cauline's life, but said he should be sent far away across the sea, and that if ever he came again within that land a cruel death should be his doom.

The gentle knight was full of woe to part thus from his lady. "Fair Christabel," he sighed wistfully, "far rather would I die than part from thee!"

When Sir Cauline had gone the Lady Christabel was brought forth from her tower, but evermore she pined and drooped, like some fair lily nipped by an ungentle wind. And ever she lamented and wept to lose her lover thus: "Sir Cauline, Sir Cauline, little dost thou think of me, but I will still be true!"

Many a king, and duke, and lord of high degree, came to woo the fair lady, but she would have none of them.

When the days went on and on, and still she found no comfort, the King proclaimed a tournament, hoping to cheer her mind.

Lords and knights from many a far country came to break a spear for their own ladies' love before the beautiful Princess. And many a lady sat there in purple splendour, but the lovely Christabel, so woebegone, was the fairest of them all. And many a knight strove gallantly before his beautiful lady, but a stranger knight, whom no man knew, won the prize each day.

This knight's armour, his coat of mail and his shield, were all black; no man knew whence he came nor whither he went when he left the field.

Three days flew past in feats of chivalry, and lo! on the fourth morning they saw a woeful sight—a huge giant,



“The King, he started forth, I wis,
And an angry man was he ;
‘Now, traitor, thou shalt hang or draw,
And rue shall thy ladye.’”

Sir Cauline

hideous of limb and face, with two goggling eyes flashing fire, and a mouth from ear to ear.

Before him came a dwarf, to wait on him, and at his back he bore five heads, all wan and pale.

“Sir King,” quoth the dwarf, bowing low, “behold that noble Sultan ! Behold these heads I bear ; they are the heads of Kings whom he hath slain ! The Eldritch Knight is his own cousin, whom a knight of thine hath disgraced, and my master has come to avenge his wrong, and to thee in the midst of thy knights he here sendeth defiance. But even now he will appease his wrath to win thy daughter’s love, and unless thou yield him that fair maid thy halls and towers must burn. Thy head, Sir King, must go with me, or else thy dear daughter ; or else within these broad lists thou must find him a champion.”

The King turned and looked around him, and his heart was full of woe.

“Is there never a knight of my Round Table who will undertake this matter ?” he said. “Is there never a knight amongst you all who will fight for my daughter and me ? Whoever will fight yonder grim Sultan, right fair shall be his reward. For he shall have my broad meadowlands, and be heir to my crown, and he shall win the fair Christabel to be his wedded wife.”

But all the knights of the Round Table stood pale and still, for whenever they looked on the grim Sultan it made their hearts quail.

All weebegone was the fair Lady Christabel when she saw there was no help at hand. She thought of her own true love, Sir Cauline, who had fought so gallantly before,

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and whom her father had banished ; and the tears gushed from her eyes, for she feared there was now no champion so brave to fight for her.

Then up started the stranger knight.

“ Lady, be not afraid,” he said. “ I will fight for thee with this grim Sultan, though he be hideous to see. And if thou wilt lend me the Eldritch sword that lieth in thy bower, I trust in Christ to slay this fiend, though he be fierce and strong.”

“ Go, fetch him down the Eldritch sword !” cried the King in haste. “ Now, heaven speed thee, courteous knight ! My daughter is thy reward.”

“ Away ! away !” shouted the giant, as he stepped into the lists. “ Thou art hindering me here all day.”

Then the stranger knight came forth, clad in his black armour. And the lady, seeing him, sighed, “ Ah, that this were my own true knight !”

Now the giant and the knight met in the lists, and with their keen swords they began to lay on heavy blows. The Sultan struck the knight a stroke that made him reel, and the Lady Christabel was full of grief, and thrice she sighed. The Sultan struck a second stroke, which made the knight’s blood flow ; then the Lady Christabel grew pale, and she wept for sorrow. The Sultan struck a third fell stroke, which brought the knight to his knee ; then Lady Christabel’s heart was pierced with woe, and she shrieked aloud.

At the sound of her bitter cry the knight leaped to his feet, reckless of the pain.

“ Now may heaven speed me,” he quoth, “ or else I shall be slain !” He grasped his sword with all his might,

Sir Cauline

and spying his chance, drove it into the Sultan's side, piercing him to the heart.

All the people shouted when they saw the Sultan fall, and the Lady Christabel wept and thanked heaven that had rescued her from bondage.

The King rose up from his seat, with all his barons, and down he stepped into the lists to greet the gallant knight. But the stranger, from pain and loss of blood, had fallen into a swoon, and there he lay on the ground, lifeless.

"Come down, come down, my dear daughter!" cried the King. "Thou art skilled in surgery. Far rather would I lose half my lands than that this good knight should come to harm."

Then the Lady Christabel stepped down to help the stranger knight, but when she raised his beaver, "It is my life, my lord!" she shrieked, and swooned away.

Sir Cauline just lifted up his eyes when he heard Christabel's voice.

"Oh, lady, I am thine own true love; for thee I wished to die!" he said. Then giving her one parting look, he closed his eyes in death before Christabel had recovered from her swoon.

But when she found her own true knight was indeed dead, she laid her pale cold cheek against his.

"Oh, my dear and only lord," she murmured sadly, "stay for me, thy faithful wife! It is meet I should follow thee, who hast so dearly bought my love!"

Then with a deep-drawn sigh that broke her tender heart, fair Christabel fell dead beside her own true knight.

The Heir of Linn



LONG AGO, in bonny Scotland, there lived a lord, who from his wild and wasteful habits was known by the name of "the Unthrifty Heir of Linn." His father had been a right good lord, and his mother a lady of high degree; but, alas! they were both dead. And now their son loved nothing but pleasure and rioting, to spend the days in merry cheer, to drink and revel all the night, to play at cards and dice, to ride, to run, to rant, always to spend, and never to save—such were the things in which the young lord delighted, and if it had been the King himself, he would soon have left himself bare of gold and lands. So it fared with the unthrifty Lord of Linn, till all his gold was spent and gone, and he had to sell his broad lands, his house and fields, and everything he owned.

His father had had a very keen steward, "John o' the Scales," he was called; but John had now become a gentleman, and had got for himself gold and lands.

When the Heir of Linn told him of his distress, this man pretended to be very friendly.

The Heir of Linn

“Welcome, welcome, Lord of Linn !” he cried. “Let nought disturb thy merry cheer ! If thou wilt sell me thy broad lands, I’ll give thee here good store of gold.”

“My gold is gone, my money is spent, take now my land !” said the reckless young man. “Give me the gold, good John o’ the Scales, and my lands shall be thine for ever.”

Then John drew up a deed, and threw him down a penny in token that the bargain was settled ; but for every pound that John agreed to pay, the land was well worth three.

John counted out the money there and then ; he was right glad to win the land.

“The gold is thine, the land is mine, and now *I* shall be Lord of Linn !” he cried joyfully.

Thus the Heir of Linn sold all his lands, hill and holt, moor and marsh—everything but a poor little lodge, which stood far off in a lonely glen ; for this he had promised his father never to part with.

“My son, when I am gone,” the father had said, “then thou wilt fling away all thy gold, and sell all thy broad lands ; but swear a solemn oath to me now that thou wilt never sell that lonely lodge. For when all the world frowns on thee, there shalt thou find a faithful friend.”

When the Heir of Linn’s hands were again full of gold from John o’ the Scales, then he called all his friends together again, and bade them eat and drink with him, and make merry. They feasted and rioted till all the gold melted away, and then all his friends slunk off, and left the unthrifty Heir of Linn. He had nothing left in his purse but three pennies ; one was brass, one was lead, one was tin.

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“Now well-a-day, woe is me!” sighed the young spendthrift. “When I was Lord of Linn, I never lacked money nor lands. But I have many trusty friends; why should I feel dole or care? I’ll borrow from them all in turn, so that I shall never be in want.”

But when he came to ask for help, he found his friends were by no means so ready to welcome him. One was not at home; another had paid away all his money; another called him “thrifless loon,” and sharply bade him begone.

“Now, well-a-day, woe is me!” said the Heir of Linn. “For when I had my lands, they lived right merrily on me. To beg my bread from door to door would be burning disgrace; to rob and steal would be a sin; to work I cannot train my limbs. Now, I will away to that lonely lodge, for there my father bade me go. He said when all the world would frown on me, I should there find a trusty friend.”

Away, then, went the Heir of Linn, over hill and holt, and fen and moor, until he came to that lowly lodge, standing in a lonesome glen. He looked up, he looked down, hoping to win a little comfort, but the walls were bare and hideous.

“Here is sorry cheer!” quoth the Heir of Linn.

The little window, dim and dark, was overhung with ivy, yew, and briars; no shimmering sun ever shone here, no wholesome wind ever blew. He could spy no chair, no table, no welcome bed, no cheerful hearth—nothing save a rope with a running noose, which hung dangling over his head. And over it in big letters, very plainly to be seen, were these words: “Ah, graceless

The Heir of Linn

wretch, hast spent thine all, and brought thyself to penury ? All this my boding mind misgave. I therefore left this trusty friend. Let it now shield thy bitter disgrace, and end all thy shame and sorrow.”

The Heir of Linn was deeply abashed with this rebuke, and his heart felt breaking with guilt and sorrow and shame.

“ This is indeed a trusty friend, and right welcome to me,” he said.

Then he drew the cord round his neck, and sprang aloft when lo, the ceiling burst in two, and he fell tumbling to the ground ! There he lay stunned, scarcely knowing if he were alive or dead. At length, looking round, he saw a letter lying beside him, and in it was a key of red gold ; on reading the letter, he found it brought him good comfort, for it told him of a hole in the wall, in which there stood three chests. Two were full of beaten gold, and the third of silver, and over them was written in big letters, plainly to be seen :

“ Once more, my son, I set thee clear ; amend thy life and past follies ; for unless thou amend thy life, that rope must be thy end at last.”

“ Let it be so,” said the Heir of Linn, “ let it be so, unless I amend ; for here I swear this counsel shall guide me for the rest of my days.”

Away then merrily went the Heir of Linn, and he never paused till he came to the house of John o’ the Scales. When he came to the house he looked in at the window, and there he saw three lords sitting in a row, drinking wine. And John himself sat at the head of the table, because he was now Lord of Linn

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"I pray thee, good John o' the Scales, lend me forty pence," said the Heir of Linn.

"Away, away, thou thriftless loon! Away, away, I cannot do so! May all evil befall me if ever I trust thee with another penny."

Then the Heir of Linn besought the wife of John o' the Scales: "Madame, bestow some alms on me, for sweet Saint Charity."

"Away, away, thou thriftless loon! I swear thou shalt get no alms of me, for if we should hang any rascal here, we would begin first with thee."

Then up spoke a good fellow who sat at John o' the Scales' table.

"Come, thou Heir of Linn; in days gone by thou wert a very good lord, and didst not spare thy gold and lands; therefore I will lend thee forty pence, and another forty, too, if need be. And I pray thee, John o' the Scales, let him always sit at thy table, for well I know thou hadst his land, and a good bargain it was to thee."

John o' the Scales answered with an angry oath that he had lost by the bargain.

"And here I offer thee, Heir of Linn, before all these lords," he cried boastfully, "to have thy land back again cheaper by a hundred marks than I had it of thee. I call you to record, lords." And with that he flung down a penny as pledge of his bargain.

"Now, by my faith, here, good John, is thy money!" said the Heir of Linn. And he pulled out three bags of gold, and laid them on the table.

John o' the Scales was dismayed at the answer to his taunt, and so astounded he could not say a word.



“ . . . A hole in the wall
In which there stood three chests to see ;
Two were full of the beaten gold,
The third was full of white money.”

The Heir of Linn

Then the real Heir of Linn counted out the good red gold, which fell with a clashing and jangle of coins.

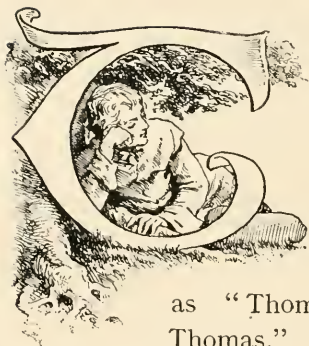
“The gold is thine, the land is mine, and now I am again the Heir of Linn,” he cried. “Come thou here, thou good fellow,” he added. “Forty pence thou didst lend me. Now I am again the Lord of Linn, and I will give thee forty pounds. And I will make thee keeper of my forest, both of the tame deer and the wild ; for unless I reward thy bounteous heart, good fellow, I were to blame.”

“Well-a-day, woe is me !” quoth Dame Joan. “Yesterday I was Lady of Linn ; now I am only the wife of John o’ the Scales.”

“Now fare thee well,” said the Heir of Linn ; “farewell, John o’ the Scales. May all evil befall me if ever again I bring my lands in jeopardy !”

Thomas the Rhymer

Under the Eildon Tree



OWARDS the close of the thirteenth century there lived at Ercildoune, a little village in the South of Scotland a famous man, whose name was Thomas Learmont, but who is better known in tradition as "Thomas the Rhymer," or "True Thomas." In his own day and after his death Thomas Learmont won wide renown, not only as a poet, but also as a prophet, for he had the power of foretelling future events in a marvellous manner.

According to popular belief, he acquired this gift of prophesy from the fairies, having been carried away by the Queen of Elfland into her kingdom, where he dwelt for seven years. One morning, it is said, in the merry month of May, "True Thomas" was roaming alone in Huntly woods. All around him the woodland rang with the song of birds, and Thomas sat him down on a bank to listen. As he lay there, he saw a strange marvel.

A beautiful lady came riding over the lonely plain,



"True Thomas lay on Buntly bank ;
A ferlie he spied wi' his ee ;
And there he saw a ladie bright,
Come riding down by the Eildon tree."

Thomas the Rhymer

down past the Eildon tree. Her palfrey was of dapple-grey, like no horse Thomas had ever seen before, and the lady herself shone like the sun on a summer's day. Her saddle was of pure ivory, thickly set with precious stones and hung round with crimson cloth. Clusters of jewels glittered in the sun. The lady's dress was grass-green silk, her mantle of fine velvet. Her brow was white as the swan, her hair floated in the wind. As she rode across the lonely plain, she sang gay little snatches of song. The girths of her saddle were of silk, the buckles of beryl stone, the stirrups of clear crystal, studded with pearls. The trappings of her steed were richly wrought, the bridle was of fine gold, and on her horse's mane jangled fifty and nine silver bells. She led seven greyhounds in a leash, and seven other hunting dogs ran at her side. A horn was slung round her neck, and in her girdle were many arrows. This was the wonderful sight that Thomas saw as he lay on Huntly bank.

"Yonder must be the Queen of Heaven!" he thought. "Unless I speak with her, my heart will burst. But I will run with all my might, and meet her before she passes by."

Then he sprang to his feet and away he sped, and, as the story says, he met the lady at the Eildon tree.

True Thomas pulled off his cap, and knelt down before her.

"Lovely lady," he said, "have pity on me, as thou wilt may, Queen of Heaven!"

"O no, O no, Thomas," she said; "that name does not belong to me. I am but the Queen of Elfland, who

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has come here to visit you. And if you dare to kiss my lips, you will be in my power."

"Betide me weal, betide me woe, that destiny shall never daunt me," said Thomas. And there beneath the Eildon tree he kissed her rosy lips.

"Now you must go with me, True Thomas," said the Queen of Elfland, "and you must serve me well through weal or through woe."

She mounted her steed, and took Thomas up behind her, and away they went, swifter than the wind. On, on they rode, farther and farther, until they reached a wide desert, and living land was left behind.

"Take thy leave of sun and moon and grass and tree," said the lady. "This twelvemonth thou shalt go with me, and shall not see the earth."

She led him in at the Eildon hill by a secret underground passage, dark as midnight, and where they waded through water up to their knees. For three days they went on, and heard no sound but the lapping of the water.

"Woe is me!" said Thomas at last, "I almost die for lack of food."

Then the Queen of Elfland led him to a fair arbour, where fruit was growing in great plenty—ripe pears and apples, dates and damsons, figs and grapes; the nightingale was building her nest, bright-coloured popinjays flew here and there, and the throstle sang without ceasing.

Thomas hurried forward to pluck the fruit, like a man faint for food, but the Queen of Elfland bade him stay.

"Thomas, let that be, or else you will be forfeit to the

Thomas the Rhymer

fiend ! If you pluck the fruit, your soul will go to hell, and there it will stay till doomsday. Come, Thomas, lay your head down on my knee ; rest awhile, and I will show you three marvels.

“ Do you not see that narrow road thickly beset with thorns and briars ? That is the path of righteousness, which few seek after. And do you not see that broad, broad road, lying across the meadow of lilies ? That is the path of wickedness, though some call it the road to heaven. And do you not see that bonny road that winds about the ferny brae ? That is the road to fair Elfland, where thou and I must go this night. But, Thomas, whatever you may see or hear, you must hold your tongue ; for if you speak one word in Elfland, you will never get back to your own country.

“ Now, do you see yonder fair castle that stands upon a hill ? It is more beautiful than any other town or tower, and there is nothing like it on your earth. That castle is my own, Thomas, and the King’s of this country ; but it were better for me to be hanged and quartered than for the King to know that you loved me.

“ When you come to yonder grey castle I pray you be courteous, and whatsoever any man shall say to you, answer no one but me. My lord is served at every meal by thirty gallant knights, and I shall say, sitting at the dais, that I took away your speech beyond the sea.”

Thomas stood as still as a stone, looking at the beautiful lady, and so she rode on with her palfrey and her hunting-dogs, and blew her horn with might and main, and took her way to the castle.

As she entered the great hall with Thomas following

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beside her, fair and gentle ladies came forward, greeting her with low curtsies. Harp and fiddle were sounding, zithern and psaltery, lute and rebeck, and all manner of minstrelsy. Knights were dancing by three and three, and lovely ladies in rich array were dancing with them, and all sorts of games and revelry were going on. But Thomas thought the most curious sight there was the great heap of slain deer which lay upon the floor, while fresh supplies were constantly being brought in, and multitudes of cooks were cutting them up and preparing them for food, as if they were mad.

So there was feasting and revelry more than I can tell you.

But at last it befell that the Queen of Elfland bade Thomas make himself ready to depart, for he might stay there no longer.

"Hie thee fast, with might and main," she said. "I will go with thee to the Eildon tree."

Then Thomas was sad at heart, and begged to be allowed to stay a little longer.

"For certainly I have only been here the space of three days," he said.

"In good sooth, Thomas, you have been here seven years and more," answered the lady. "You must dwell here no longer, and I will tell you the reason why. To-morrow a foul fiend of hell will choose his fee from these folk, and you are so fair and well-favoured, I know he will choose you. For all the gold in the world, you shall never be betrayed for me, and therefore I counsel you to go with me."

So the Queen of Elfland brought Thomas again to

Thomas the Rhymer

the Eildon tree, under the greenwood spray, back to beautiful Huntly banks, where the birds sing day and night. There she bade him farewell, for she might no longer stay with him.

Then Thomas begged of her some token that he might say he had spoken with her. And she gave him the gift of poesy and prophesy, to be the most wonderful minstrel the land had ever seen, although till that moment he could neither harp nor sing. And whatever he said or sung would always be true, and he would be able to tell in advance events that were yet to come.

“Wherever you go, by firth or fell, saying or singing,” she ended, “I pray you never speak any ill of me.”

True Thomas was very sad, and the tears fell from his eyes, and he begged the Queen of Elfland to say if they were then parting for ever and always.

“Nay, when you are again at Ercildoune, take your way to Huntly bank, and there I shall be ready to meet you, if I can. I will send you a sign, Thomas : when you shall see a hart and a hind leave the forest, and pace slowly and unafraid through the crowd in the village street, then you will know that the hour is come. Hasten and seek me here beneath the Eildon tree.”

She blew her horn and turned her palfrey, and left him there where he stood at the Eildon tree. And thus parted True Thomas and the Queen of Elfland.

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Ban and Blessing



EVEN years had come and gone when one fair morning, as the sun twinkled down on stream and pool, True Thomas lay once more on Huntly bank, like one awakened from a dream.

He heard the trampling of a steed, and saw the flash of armour, and then he beheld a gallant knight come riding down by the Eildon tree. He was strong and stalwart, and urged forward his steed with golden spurs.

"Well met, well met, True Thomas!" he cried. "Now show me some strange marvels that are yet to come."

"Thrice welcome, good Dunbar!" returned True Thomas. "Alight, and I will show thee three curses that shall make bonny Scotland weep and wail, and change the green livery to black.

"This very hour a storm shall roar from the hills of Ross to the Solway Sea——"

"You lie, you lie, false wizard, for the sun shines bright on field and plain!"

Thomas placed his hand on Dunbar's head, and then the Earl saw a strange sight—a rock beside the sea where

Thomas the Rhymer

a King lay stiff and dead beneath his steed, and mail-clad nobles stood weeping.*

“The next curse lies on Brankston hills. On high and heathery Flodden shall wave a banner red as blood, and chieftains shall throng there in their pride. Full keen shall come a Scottish King bearing the ruddy lion, but a feathered arrow shall make him quail. As he lies wounded and covered with blood, thus shall he say to his men : ‘For God’s sake turn back again and fight those southern folk ! Why should I lose the right that is mine ? My doom is not to die this day.’†

“Now turn to the eastern hand,” went on the prophet, “and you shall see woe and wonder—how forty thousand spearmen stand where yonder river meets the sea. There shall the lion lose the mastery and the leopards bear it clean away. At Pinkie Cleugh shall be spilt that day much gentle blood.”‡

“Enough, enough of curse and ban ! Show me now some blessings, or by the faith of my body,” quoth Dunbar, “you shall rue the day you ever saw me !”

“The first blessing I shall show you,” said True Thomas, “is by a burn that’s called of bread.§ where

* King Alexander III. was killed by falling from a cliff near Kinghorn, when riding one dark night on the coast of Fife, March 12, 1286. His death plunged the whole kingdom of Scotland into strife and uproar, owing to rival claimants battling for the throne.

† After the battle of Flodden Field, 1513 the fate of James IV. was for a time uncertain.

‡ Pinkie Cleugh, a village a few miles east of Edinburgh, where in 1547 a battle was fought in which the English defeated the forces of Mary, Queen of Scots.

§ Bannock-Burn is here meant ; a “bannock” in Scotland is a thick round cake of unleavened bread. On the field of Bannockburn

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Saxon men shall draw the bow, and find their arrows fail them. Beside that bridge over the burn where the water bickers clear and sparkling shall many a charger fall struggling to the ground, and many a gallant knight die in battle. Beside a headless stone cross the leopards shall lose their mastery; the eagle shall go, and the raven shall come, and shall drink freely of the Saxon blood. The cross of stone will they not know, so thick around it shall lie the bodies of the slain."

"But tell me now, True Thomas," said Dunbar, "what man shall rule the isle of Britain, even from the north to the southern sea?"

"A French Queen shall bear a son who shall rule all the land from sea to sea,"* said True Thomas. "And he shall come of the Bruce's blood in the ninth degree. The waters shall worship his race, and the waves of the uttermost sea, for they shall ride over the wide ocean with hempen bridles and horse of wood."

the Scotch, under Robert Bruce, defeated the English in 1314, and secured the independence of Scotland.

* Refers to James VI. of Scotland and First of England, son of Mary, Queen of Scots (married first to the Dauphin of France), who by his accession to the throne united the two kingdoms.

Thus Thomas the Rhymer foretold events that in some cases were not to happen till hundreds of years after he himself had passed away.

Thomas the Rhymer

The Hart and the Hind



HEN seven more years were come and gone war was raging through Scotland, and beacons blazed red on the hills of Ruberslaw and Dun-yon. On the bonny Cowden-knows pavilions were pitched, and crested helms and ranks of spears glanced gaily through the broom. Where the Leader rolls onward to the Tweed resounded the gathering war-cry and roused the startled deer from Caddenhead and distant Torwoodlee.

At Ercildoune, in the high and ancient hall of the Learmonts, the feast was spread, and there were knights of renown and lovely ladies in rich attire. Nor lacked they music or tale as the red wine sparkled in the goblet, and the ale frothed in the cup. When the feast was done True Thomas rose, harp in hand—the elfin harp he had won in Fairyland in minstrel strife. A hush fell on all the throng, while the other harpers turned pale with envy, and mail-clad warriors leaned on their swords to listen.

The story that he told has come down to us in fragments, but no later poet could match the magic charm of the minstrel who had learnt his craft in Elfland.

He sang of King Arthur's Round Table and Sir Lancelot of the Lake, and the gentle Gawaine who fought and bled for the sake of fair ladies. But chiefly in praise of the

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noble knight Sir Tristram rose the minstrel's strain, for in King Arthur's days there were none who excelled the knight of Lyonesse. He sang of Iseult of the lily hands, the fair Princess of Ireland who healed Sir Tristram of his grievous wound, and he told how, doomed to be the bride of cruel Mark of Cornwall, she pledged Sir Tristram in the fatal magic draught, and henceforth lost her heart to him for ever. He sang of their loves and woes. And as the rhythmic words fell on the ears of the listening throng they saw once more in fancy the gleaming walls of Joyous Gard and the enchanted vale of Avalon.

When the harp paused, its lingering sound dying slowly away, the guests for awhile stayed silent and motionless, for it seemed to them they still heard the magic notes. Then as the mists of evening fell on Leader's stream and Learmont's tower, in camp and castle the warriors sought repose. Lord Douglas in his tent was dreaming over the sorrowful tale when he heard the sound of light footsteps coming across the grass. He woke with a start, and roused the page who slept at his feet. Together they rushed from the tent, and there on the banks of the Leader they saw a strange marvel. A snow-white hart and hind were pacing side by side in the moonlight. Slow and stately, with proud gesture, they moved along, unscared by the gathering crowd, who marvelled as they went. A page was despatched at full speed to carry the tidings to Thomas Learmont in his castle. Thomas sprang from his bed and dressed in haste. Pale and red he waxed by turns, but the only words he spoke were : " My sand is run, my thread is spun—this sign is sent for me."

He slung his elfin harp round his neck in minstrel

Thomas the Rhymer

fashion, and the wind moaned through its strings. Then he stepped forth from the castle, yet often turned to look back. The moonlight fell with a soft lustre on the old grey tower, while the waves of the Leader danced shimmering in the rays like shining silver.

“Farewell, my father’s ancient tower—a long farewell!” he cried. “Never more shalt thou be the scene of pomp or pleasure. No foot of earth shall here belong again to Learmont’s name, and where the cheerful fire blazed of yore the wild hare shall nestle her young. Farewell, farewell!” He turned and cast one last look all around him. “Farewell to Leader’s silver tide. Farewell to Ercildoune.”

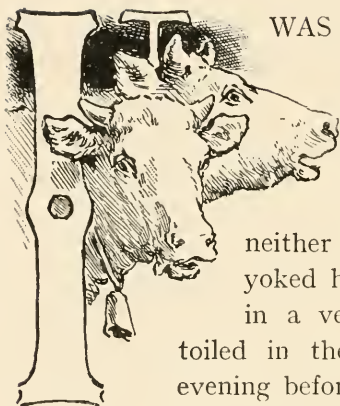
As he stood lingering, the hart and the hind drew near, and there, before Lord Douglas’s face, the minstrel crossed the stream with them. Lord Douglas leaped on his horse, and spurred him over the Leader, but, although he rode at lightning speed, he never saw them again.

Some said they took their wondrous course to the hills, and some to the glen, but never more was Thomas of Ercildoune seen in the haunts of living men.

Thomas the Rhymer has gone, but his memory still lives on in the heart of the Scottish people. A large stone marks the place where of old stood the Eildon tree, and a rivulet near takes the name of Bogle Burn (Goblin Brook), from the weird visitants who were supposed to convey to the minstrel his supernatural knowledge of future events.

Some say that in Elfland Thomas the Rhymer still lives on, and that one day he will again revisit mortal earth.

The Wife of Auchtermuchty



IT WAS very rough weather ; the wind blew and the rain poured down. Jock Grumlie, a small farmer of Auchtermuchty, who could tipple out a can of beer well enough, loved neither cold nor hunger, and as he yoked his plough in the field he was in a very bad temper. All day he toiled in the driving sleet, and it was evening before he came to the end of the land and could drive his oxen home. As he came in, wet and cold, it added to his bad temper to see his wife sitting dry and clean in front of a blazing fire, enjoying a bowl of good soup.

“Where is the corn for my horse ?” he demanded in a surly tone. “The oxen have neither hay nor straw ! Very fine for you to sit here at your ease while I toil and moil from day’s end to day’s end. I’m quite tired of it, I can tell you ! Dame, you shall go to the plough to-morrow, and I’ll stay at home and look after the house. See what a miserable seed-time it is, nothing but rain and cold ; but you stop here warm, and have none of the trouble. To-morrow morning you shall go out with the

The Wife of Auchtermuchty

lad, and then you will know what farmers have to go through."

"All right, good man," quoth his wife quietly; "I am quite content to take my day turn about at the plough, provided you will look after the cows and the calves, and everything about the house, inside and out. And now, since it is you who have made the arrangement, pray see it is carried out; they ride surely who never have a fall, therefore let nothing be neglected.

"But as you want to know housekeeping, let me tell you a few things. First, you must dress the children, and see they are clean and neat; then you must turn the malt, or the beer will be spoilt; you will have to sift the flour, and then to knead the bread, and be sure all the time as you go in and out to keep an eye on the children to see they don't get into mischief. You must milk Tidy, the cow, and don't forget to feed the little pigs in the sty; and you must reel the spool of yarn I spun yesterday—oh, and what ever you do, keep the little chickens from the hawk, and don't let the hens wander off and lay away."

The good wife stopped up late that night, and worked hard. She churned all the butter, and skimmed the milk, and left nothing but butter-milk for her husband. The next morning she rose early, and, taking a good supply of food with her to serve as breakfast, she prepared to start.

"Good-bye, Jock!" she said cheerfully. "Do your work well, and I'll promise you a fine new shirt, either of round cloth or small cloth."

Then she loosed the oxen, eight or nine of them, and, taking a goad-stick in her hand, set off on her day's work.

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Soon after, Jock Grumlie rose, and saw what his wife had commanded was to be done.

First he called the little chickens to feed. There were but seven of them altogether, and when Jock went indoors again to see to something else, down swooped the greedy hawk, and cleared off five of them. The moment he heard the chickens cry Jock rushed out, but by that time there were only two left.

While he was lamenting over these, the calves broke loose, and drank all the milk from the cows ; the cows and the calves had a scrimmage in the narrow path leading to the byre ; and when Jock ran with a long stick to clear them out, a bad-tempered cow ran from behind him, and prodded him sharply with her horn.

He then hastened home to a distaff of tow, and sat down to try to spin ; but he made a fine muddle of that, and soon gave up in despair. Next he tried his hand at the churn, but, although he stirred and splashed with might and main for fully an hour, not a scrap of butter could he get. Quite tired out, he went to draw himself a mug of beer, and while he was away the greedy sow walked in, and, poking her nose into the churn, drank up all the milk. Furious at this, Jock caught up a club, and thought to give the sow a good crack with it ; but the sow slipped away, and the blow fell instead on the two little chickens the hawk had spared, and killed them. Jock next stood on the chimney-post to reach down the meat into the pot, when he fell backwards into the fire, and cut his head on the grate. However, he managed to get the big pot on to the fire, and, seizing two cans, ran to the spout for water ; but when he came back he found the



“She heard him as she heard him not,
But stoutly steered the stots about.”

The Wife of Auchtermuchty

fire had burnt out all the bottom of the pot. The flames rushed up the chimney and set the soot on fire, which quite frightened him, and big lumps fell and burnt his hair and covered him with black. He fetched some water in a can, and quenched the fire, and then he started to sweep the house, for he wanted to have everything in good order.

It now occurred to him that he had better look after the children, but they had been neglected so long that they had got very dirty and untidy. It struck Jock that it would be a good plan to wash some of their clothes, so he dragged them down to the brook, but the burn was flooded owing to the late heavy rains, and before he could save them the stream had washed the clothes away.

By this time Jock Grumlie had had enough of trying to keep house, and thought he might as well have back his wife. He ran to the top of a neighbouring knoll, and shouted and called to her, but she pretended not to hear, and went on driving the oxen in the plough. She went on all day till the evening, when she loosed the plough and came home, and then she laughed as if she would never stop to find the house in such a plight, and Jock so glum and unhappy. Everything was wrong that should have been right, and her husband felt quite ashamed of himself.

"I'll give up my housekeeping," quoth he. "I'll never be good-wife again."

"Indeed," quoth she, "I'm very well content ; you may keep it for the rest of your life."

"I'll be hanged if I will," said surly John ; "I'll do as I have done before."

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With that the good-wife took up a stout stick, where-upon Jock quickly made for the door.

“Stop, stop, good-wife, I’ll hold my tongue,” he cried. “I know I am very much to blame. But henceforth I must mind the plough, and you must bide at home to look after the house.”

The Hired Lad



-HERE was once a wealthy knight who had but one son, a comely youth. The boy was sent to school after school, but he loved better to be out in the open air than toiling over books, and from his father's men he learned all kinds of rustic work—how to plough and reap and sow, and manage horses and cows.

By-and-by the knight thought it was time for his son to think of getting married, so he told him he must go and court a wife, and she must be some lady of high degree.

“You have lands, woods, money, and three castles,” said the knight, “so go, my son, and seek some dame to share your possessions with you.”

“Yes, father, I have lands and money and three castles,” replied the young man, “but suppose the lady likes my lands and money far more than she loves me? I will go and seek a wife that pleases me, but I will fairly test her love before I marry her.”

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So he took off his scarlet coat decked with gold, and put on the dress of a labouring man, and he laid aside the jewel-hilted sword that he could wield so bravely, and took a stick in his hand. Then he skipped down the castle stairs as light as a bird, and marched away whistling, in the guise of a ploughboy, to see what fortune would betide him.

Over hill and glen he went till he came to a fine castle with nine or ten turrets. Looking through the gate he saw a lady who was very pleasing to see, so without any delay he went straight to the bailiff's office, and asked modestly if they had any work they could give a hired lad. The bailiff asked what he could do, and he replied that he could sow corn and reap and plough, and look after cows and horses.

"If you do your work well we shall not quarrel about wages," said the bailiff, and he put his hand in his pocket and brought out nine shillings. "There, take that, and now come in and get your dinner."

The knight's son was as good as his word; everything he took in hand he did well. For several years he served the Baron faithfully; his master became quite fond of him, and as for the daughter of the house she fell in love with the hired lad. She tried hard to conquer her feelings, and often wept bitterly, but it was all in vain—there was something so winning about the young man she could not help loving him. She could not help thinking in her heart that her love was returned, but alas, what hired ploughboy would ever venture to hope to win the daughter of the lord of the castle?

As there seemed no chance that he would dare to

The Hired Lad

she resolved on a bold step, and wrote a letter, which she dropped where he would be sure to find it. In this letter she bade him, if he thought her worthy of his love, to meet her in the garden.

The knight's son laughed for joy when he read the letter, for now he knew he was loved for himself alone, and not for his money and lands. They met that evening in the garden, and there among the flowers told of their love for each other. But in order to test if her affection were really deep and sincere, and not merely an idle fancy, he resolved to put her to a harder proof.

"If you love me as you protest, and as I trust well you do," he said, "meet me to-morrow night at eight o'clock in the good greenwood."

"Yes, I do love you, and that most tenderly," answered the lady. "But I am afraid to go alone to the greenwood."

"Have no fear, nothing will harm you," the young man assured her; "you will return as safely as you come."

The lady was much too fond of him to refuse what he asked of her, and the next night, though it was dark and dismal, with the dew falling fast and no stars in the sky, she stole out to the trysting place under the greenwood tree. As the days passed they had many other happy meetings, and everything went on merrily until at last the lord of the castle came to know of the matter. He was furious at the thought of the hired lad's insolence in daring to lift his eyes to the Baron's daughter, and swore in his wrath that before he ate or drank that day the lad should be hanged.

"Farewell, dear maiden; I must bid you a long adieu,

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for your father has sworn a solemn oath to have me hanged," said the hired lad.

"O, woe is me !" cried the lady. "But do not be troubled ! If ever they touch a hair of your head, they'll get no good of me."

He turned on his heel, and laughed aloud in his scorn.

"The man never stood in this court who dare hang me to-day," he said.

"What insolence in you to ask my daughter to meet you in the greenwood !" cried the Baron's wife angrily.

"She came of her own free will," returned the young man. "Marry her when you like, she is none the worse for having loved me." And away he went whistling over the knoll, swift as a bird.

Time went on, wearily and heavily, till twelve months had passed, and then came a rich knight to woo the Baron's daughter. He soon gained the goodwill of the father and mother, but only by slow degrees that of the daughter. But since no news had come of the hired lad, and she cared little what became of her, at last she gave her consent to the marriage. The Baron was greatly pleased.

"Well befall you, dear daughter !" he said. "May you be happy ! How much better to give your love to a grand knight, and forget that hired ploughboy !"

"Oh, hold your tongue, dear father, and do not speak to me like that !" cried the sorrowful lady : "for I love that hired ploughboy far more than all the knights I see." And she turned aside to weep, for she thought that if the lad had loved her truly he would not have left her all those long, long months without a word or sign.



"It was a dark and cloudy night,
No stars beamed o'er the lea,
When the lady and the bircman met
Beneath a spreading tree."

The Hired Lad

The marriage morning came, and the bells rang out joyfully as all the wedding party repaired to church, while like a rose among the throng was the bride with her maidens.

But as they walked over the field amid the flowers which sprang on every side, there under a tree stood the hired lad. He stepped forward boldly, and at the sight of him the bride turned from red to white, and stood still as a stone.

“I wish you joy, my gay madam! May you always be happy!” said the hired lad. “I have a small thing here of yours—a ring, a pledge of love, that I got once from you!”

“Now, woe befall you!” cried the lady, her eyes blazing with pain and just anger. “You might have told me your name, or where your home was, or what country you came from.”

“If you love me, lady, as you protest you do, turn from this grand knight and reach your hand to me,” said the ploughboy.

Then out spoke the knight, and he was very angry indeed. “If I had known she was beloved by anyone else, she had never been loved by me. Let her go where she wishes.”

They set the lady on horseback, and away she went with the hired lad, but as they were riding along they saw her father come posting after them with fifty armed men.

“Oh, save yourself, save yourself!” cried the lady. “Leave me, and fly for safety! My father will take me back again, but I will never, never marry.”

The hired lad made no answer, but urged the horses on

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faster. As they climbed the crest of a rising hill, down in the glen below he saw his father's gilded coach, with five hundred gentlemen.

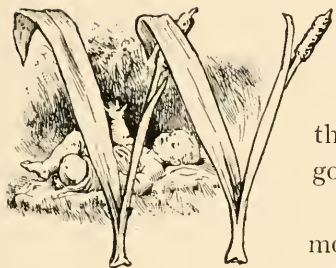
"Come back, come back, you hired ploughboy!" shouted the Baron. "Turn back and speak with me! You have served me a long time for the lady's sake; come back and get your wages!"

But the hired lad laughed in scorn.

"Give us your blessing!" he cried. "That is all we crave of you. For seven years I have served for the sake of your daughter, but now I am paid my wages."

Valentine and Orson

In the Forest of Artois



WHEN the first flowers of spring begin to deck the fields with their gay colours, then is celebrated the feast of good St. Valentine.

It happened once on that fair morning that King Pepin of France would ride a-hunting, and forth he pranced in all his princely pride to the forest of Artois. A courtly train of gallant peers attended to grace the sport, and hill and valley resounded with their cheerful voices.

They rode through the deep forest, through woods and thickets, and there down in a lonely dell they found a new-born child.

It was laid in a scarlet kerchief of the finest silk, and it was wrapped round in a mantle of cloth of gold, pinned with a silver pin.

They were all surprised at the sudden sight. The courtiers gathered round. They looked, they shouted, they sought everywhere for the mother, but no mother was to be seen.

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At last the King himself drew near. As he stood gazing, the pretty babe looked up and smiled, and stretched forth his little hands.

"Now, by my faith," said King Pepin, "this child is passing fair ! I am sure he is of gentle blood, perhaps heir to some Prince. Go, carry him home to my court with all the care you can, and let him be christened Valentine, in honour of this day when he has been found. And look me out some skilful nurse, and let him be well brought up. Let nothing be lacking that beseems a child of noble birth."

All was done as the King said, and little Valentine grew up beloved of the King and all his court, and in everything he spoke or did showed a wisdom beyond his years. But chiefly in gallant feats of arms did he excel, so that before he grew to man's estate he had no equal in France.

When he came to years of manhood young Valentine was dubbed a knight, so that he might win himself renown. He immediately begged a boon of the King, and that was, that the first adventure which befell might be given to him.

The King smiled, and agreed to his request, and before very long the chance for which Valentine longed arrived. Three palmers clad in grey came and knelt weeping before the King, and begged his aid. They said that they had come, weak and weary, from the forest of Artois, where within the deep and desolate woods roamed a savage boy, who caused grave annoyance to the King's subjects.

"He surely was bred up among ruthless bears," they said ; "he lurks within their den and lives with them ;

Valentine and Orson

he feeds with them, and eats the food they kill. To more than savage strength he adds more than human skill, and as for arms, no weapon is cunning enough to baffle him."

Then up rose Sir Valentine, and claimed that arduous adventure.

"Go forth and conquer," said the King, "and thy reward shall be great."

Splendidly mounted on a milk-white steed, and clad in snow-white armour, as befitted a knight who had never yet fought with foe, Sir Valentine repaired in all haste to the forest of Artois. He soon spied the savage youth feasting on his prey. His unkempt hair hung all matted round his shoulders, his eyes glowed like fire, his face wore a frown of fury. His nails grew like eagle's talons, his limbs were thick and strong, and he carried a dreadful club of knotted oak.

As soon as Sir Valentine came near he sprang forward with a hideous yell that made the forest ring. But he met the uplifted spear of the knight, which brought him to his knees, and a second stroke felled him to the ground.

Springing up he raised his club and aimed a dreadful blow, but the knight was wary and avoided the stroke, which fell on his spear and shattered it. Alighting nimbly from his steed, Sir Valentine drew his sword. Swift as lightning the savage flew to wrest it from his hand. Three times he grasped the silver hilt, three times he felt the blade; each time it fell with terrific force, and he roared with redoubled rage, his eyes flashing fire. Gripping hold of Sir Valentine he flung him to the ground, but the knight dragged his foe down with him, and they

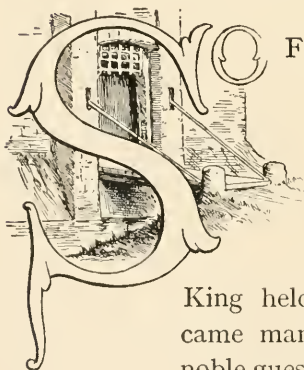
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rolled and grappled together on the ground. Long they struggled for the mastery—the knight was skilful and active, the savage was strong. But brute force must yield to art and skill ; Sir Valentine at length prevailed, and won the well-fought battle.

Binding fast his conquered foe with an iron chain he tied him to his horse's tail, and led him away. He brought his hairy captive to court, and, kneeling down, presented him to the King.

With loss of blood and loss of strength the savage grew much tamer, and in course of time he became a tried and trusty servant of Sir Valentine. And because he had been brought up in his early years by bears he was given the name of " Ursine," or Orson.

The Giant's Castle



FOR many years Sir Valentine lived in high renown with prince and peer, but the very honour in which he was held caused jealousy to some mean and envious natures. It chanced one day that the King held a sumptuous feast to which came many lords and dainty ladies and noble guests. As the wine cups went freely round in mirth and revelry, a young knight taunted Sir Valentine with being of base and doubtful birth.

Valentine and Orson

Cut to the heart at this insult so publicly hurled at him, Valentine swore a vow that he would never rest until he found his parents. Bidding farewell to King and nobles, early one summer's day, with the faithful Orson at his side, he left the court.

Over hill and valley, moor and moss, they rode for many a day, till they came at length to a moated lake, over which was a bridge of brass. Beyond it rose a splendid castle all built of marble, with golden battlements that glittered in the sun. Under the bridge by some strange device were hung a hundred bells, so that neither man nor beast might pass over it without at once ringing an alarm. This speedily became apparent to Valentine and Orson, for boldly crossing the bridge, the jangling noise suddenly deafened their ears and rang from shore to shore. Instantly at the sound the castle gates flew open, and out stalked a giant huge and grim.

"Now yield you, caitiffs, to my will!" he shouted with a hideous roar, "or else the wolves shall eat your flesh and ravens drink your blood!"

"Vain boaster, I scorn both thee and thy threats!" cried Sir Valentine. "I will batter down thy brazen gates, and set free thy captives."

Spurring his steed he aimed a dreadful thrust; the spear glanced against the giant and wounded him. Mad with rage and pain the giant whirled aloft his huge steel mace—the very wind from such a blow was enough to make the champion reel. Luckily it missed its aim, and now the knight drew his glittering sword, and riding round his foe with whirlwind speed he made him feel the blade again and again. Like the unceasing axes that hew at

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some huge oak, so round the giant's limbs flew the quick-darting blows ; and as when the boughs with a hideous fall crush some hapless woodman, with such force did the enormous foe rush on the youthful champion. At last there came one fearful blow which struck both horse and rider, and laid them senseless in the dust. With a hideous grin the giant strode up to them.

" Now, caitiff, breathe thy last !" he cried, stooping to aim a second blow.

But ere the mace fell, two thundering blows descended on his own skull ; they came from the knotty club of Orson, who had rushed forward to defend his master. Down sank the giant, groaning and gasping, and the forest youth repeated his blows with such vigour that the monster was soon dead.

Sir Valentine, under Orson's timely care, quickly recovered, and the two adventurous youths started at once to explore the castle. Wherever they went they saw the blood and bones of murdered knights, and finally in a lonely cell they found a mournful lady. Her gentle eyes were dimmed with tears, and her cheeks pale from woe.

Sir Valentine besought her to tell them her sad story, and at last she consented.

" Alas, young knight, pity my wretched fate !" she said, weeping. " You see here a childless mother, and a wife with no husband ! For twenty dreary years have I lived in this horrible place, sole witness of the crimes of a monster, and longing for death. Know, I am the sister of a King, and when still very young was married to a noble and mighty Prince. For over a year we lived in perfect love and happiness, when some malignant traitor, out of



"Beyond it rose a castle fair
Built of marble stone;
The battlements were gilt with gold,
And glittered in the sun."

Valentine and Orson

a spirit of revenge, invented a diabolical tale to poison my husband's mind against me. In his rage, my lord condemned me, all unheard, to quit the realm instantly, on pain of death.

“Overcome with grief, with one trusty knight alone as guard, I set forth on my journey to my brother's distant court. Through many foreign lands we painfully toiled, till at length, in a wild forest, I became very ill. The knight hurried away for help, leaving me there alone, but before he could get back two lovely boys were born. The eldest was smooth and fair as mountain snow, but the younger's rough little body was covered with hair. Now my woes began again. While I was tenderly wrapping the eldest child in my cloak to shield him from the cold, a prowling bear burst from the wood, and seized my youngest son. I rushed after them to save my child, but, alas, quite wearied out, weak, and spent, I fell to the ground, and there for a long time under the greenwood shade I lay in a swoon.

“At length the knight brought me relief, but neither of the pretty babes could ever be found again. While we were wandering in search of them, we met that horrible giant, who slew my faithful knight and carried me off. But whether by the grace of heaven, or because he was touched by the sight of my grief, save that he kept me for so long shut up within these dreary walls, the giant did me no wrong ”

Sir Valentine had listened with the greatest amazement to the lady's story.

“Now, surely,” he said, “you are the Lady Bellicent, wife to the Grecian Emperor, and sister to the King of

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France ? For in the court of your royal brother, I myself was brought up, and often have I listened with a sad heart to the story of your woes. If you are indeed that noble lady, know that the traitor who accused you is dead, and before he died he owned his crime. Your lord has long been seeking you through every foreign country. When he could learn no tidings of his much-wronged wife, he vowed henceforth to live the life of a hermit."

"Now, heaven is kind !" cried the lady. "Shall I indeed once more behold my own dear lord ?"

"But, madam," said Sir Valentine, as he knelt on his knee before her, "would you know the cloak in which your baby was wrapped if you once saw it again ?"

Then he pulled forth the cloth of gold in which he himself had been wrapped when the King of France found him.

The lady gave a cry, and fell fainting to the ground. By his tender care, she was quickly revived, and soon found by other tokens that Sir Valentine was indeed her son.

"But who is this youth ?" she asked, fixing her gaze on Orson. "He greatly resembles you. The bear devoured my younger child, or surely this were my son !"

"Madam, this youth was bred up with bears, and reared in their den," said Valentine. "Do you remember any mark by which you would know your son ?"

"On his little side was stamped a blood-red rose," said the Lady Bellicent.

"Here, lady, see the crimson mark on his body !" cried Sir Valentine.

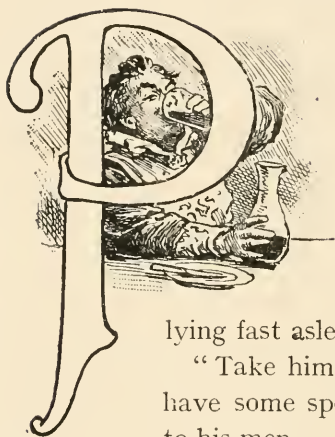
Clasping her new-found sons in her arms, the lady wept

Valentine and Orson

for joy, and soon they all took their way to her brother's court.

What pen can paint King Pepin's joy at having his dear sister thus restored? A messenger was quickly despatched to her sorrowing husband, who came in haste with all his peers to fetch her home to her own kingdom. There for many years they reigned in love and peace. They were succeeded by their son Orson, who long bore the sceptre, while Valentine stayed on in France, and became his uncle's heir.

The Frolicsome Duke



HILIP THE GOOD, Duke of Burgundy, was fond of fun and sport, and when he held his court as a young man, it often pleased his fancy to play some frolicsome jest.

One day when he was out he saw a poor tipsy tinker lying fast asleep on the ground.

“Take him home to my palace ; we will have some sport with him,” said the Duke to his men.

So they lifted up the tinker, who was so dead asleep that he never wakened, placed him on a horse, and carried him away to the palace. There they stripped off his ragged clothes, popped on some clean night-garments, and placed him in a soft bed of down, in a richly furnished chamber, where they left him to finish his sleep.

It was late the next morning when the tinker awoke, and great was his amazement to find himself in such a gaily-adorned room. Then in came knights and squires, to wait on him ; and the chamberlain, bowing before him with uncovered head, begged to know what apparel he would put on. The poor tinker dared not say a word,



"The Duke said to his men, William, Richard, and Ben,
'Take him home to my palace, we'll sport with him then.'"

The Frolicsome Duke

but gazed at the gentlemen, and wondered how he had come to such an honour. However, he chose a rich suit, in which they clad him at once ; on the breast glittered a beautiful star, which he eyed with no little pride.

“ Where is Joan, my sweet wife ? ” he said to himself. “ If only she were here now ! Sure, she never saw me so fine in her life ! ”

All this time, from a convenient place, the rightful Duke was watching his behaviour.

“ Will it please your Grace to walk ? ” asked the attendants ; and they led him to a garden of state. Trumpets sounded before him, and captains and squires in scarlet and blue waited on him. Here he spent an hour or two very pleasantly, walking about and seeing all the beauties of the place

When dinner-time came, a fine feast was prepared, both for him and his guests. He was placed at the table above all the rest, in a splendid chair lined with fine crimson, and with a rich golden canopy over his head. As he sat at meat, sweet music played, with the choicest of singing to complete his enjoyment.

At dinner the tinker drank plenty of wine—canary and sherry and tent ; he tossed off bowl after bowl, till at last he could sit in his chair no longer, but rolled on to the floor, where he fell asleep and snored loudly.

Then the Duke ordered that he should be stripped of his rich clothing, and that his old leather garments should be restored to him, after which he was carried back to the place where he had been found at first. There he slept soundly all the night, as indeed he well might do ; but when he woke the next morning all his joys had taken

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flight. He was just thinking his past glory must have been a mere golden dream, when up came the guard, and carried him before the Duke.

The poor tinker was terrified to find himself a prisoner in the very same palace where yesterday it had seemed to him he was a lord, and he began to entreat pardon of the Duke, fearing that the latter would think in some way he had been mocking him.

But his Highness spoke kindly, telling him it had been nothing but a joke.

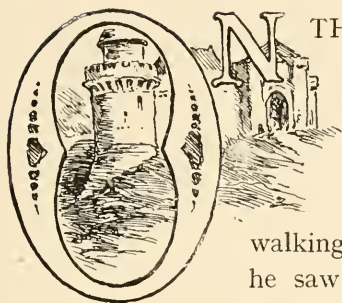
“Thou art a jolly fine fellow, and such a frolic, I think, was never played before,” he said.

Then the Duke ordered that a new suit and cloak should be given to him, for the sake of the amusement they had had.

“Nay, and thou shalt have five hundred pounds,” he added, “and ten acres of ground ; and thou shalt never again have to wander through the country crying ‘Old brass to mend !’ for I will be thy good friend, and Joan, thy sweet wife, shall attend my Duchess.”

“What !” cried the happy tinker, “must Joan, my sweet bride, ride in chariots of pleasure ? Shall we have gold and land every day at our command ? Then I shall be a squire !—Well, I thank your good grace, and lovingly enter your service. I was never so happy before in my life !”

The Child of Elle



THE crest of a high hill stood a castle, with lordly walls and towers, and there dwelt the Child of Elle, a young and comely knight.

The Child of Elle was walking one day in his garden, when he saw a little page come tripping down the dale. The knight knew

him to be the page of the beautiful Lady Emmeline, and, hurrying forth, he met him as he came climbing up the hill.

“Now Christ save thee, thou little foot-page!” cried the knight in greeting. “Oh, tell me how thy lady does, and what may be thy tidings?”

“My lady is all weebegone, and the tears fall from her eyes,” said the little page, “and ever she laments the deadly feud between her house and thine. And here she sends thee a silken scarf, bedewed with many a tear, and bids thee sometimes think of her who loved thee so dearly. And here she sends thee a ring of gold, the last boon thou mayst have, and she bids thee wear it for her sake when she is laid in the grave. For her gentle heart is broken, and she must soon die, since her father hath

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chosen her a new love, and forbidden her to think of thee. Her father has brought a churlish knight from the North country, and within three days she must wed this Sir John, or he vows he will slay her."

"Now, hie thee back, thou little foot-page, and greet thy lady from me," said the knight. Tell her that I, her own true love, will set her free, or die. Hie thee back, and let thy lady know that this night I will be at her bower window, betide me weal or betide me woe."

Then the boy hurried back, without stop or stay, until he reached the Lady Emmeline's bower, and there, kneeling down, he gave the message from the Child of Elle.

Now the day was over, and the night had come, and everyone in the castle was fast asleep—everyone except the Lady Emmeline, who sat in her bower to weep. Then, low whispering at the wall, she heard her lover's voice :

"Awake, awake, my dear lady ; 'tis I, thy true love, who call. Awake, awake, my dear lady ! Come, mount this palfrey. This ladder of ropes will let thee down, and I will carry thee away from here."

At first the Lady Emmeline was afraid to go, but the knight told her he would carry her safely to his mother, where they would be married.

"My father is a baron, of proud and high lineage," said the Lady Emmeline. "What would he say if his daughter fled away with a knight ? Ah, well I know he would never rest until he had slain thee, Child of Elle."

"O lady, wert thou only in thy saddle and a little way off, I would not care for thy cruel father, nor the worst he

The Child of Elle

could do," said the knight. "Once outside these walls, I would not care for thy father, nor the worst that could befall."

Fair Emmeline sighed and wept, and her heart was full of woe, but the knight seized her lily white hand, and drew her down the ladder. Thrice he clasped her to his breast and tenderly kissed her, and then he set her on the palfrey, and mounted himself on his tall steed, and slung his bugle around his neck, and away they rode at a good pace.

But Emmeline's damsel had heard everything as she lay in bed, and she said to herself, "My lord shall know of this, and then I shall have a good reward." So she ran and wakened the Baron, and told him that his daughter had fled with the Child of Elle.

The Baron rose in haste, and called up his men.

"And come thou forth, Sir John," he shouted; "for thy lady is carried away to thrall."

Fair Emmeline and her love had scarcely ridden a mile out of the town when they were aware of the Baron's men galloping over the down. And foremost among them came the churlish knight, Sir John of the North country.

"Stop, stop, thou false traitor; carry not that lady away!" shouted Sir John; "for she is of noble race, and it ill beseems thee, a false churl's son, to carry her hence to scorn."

"Now, loud thou liest, Sir John!" returned the Child of Elle. "I am no churl's son. A knight was my father, and a lady was my mother, which cannot be said of thee. But alight now, my own dear lady—alight and hold my

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horse, while I and this discourteous knight try the force of our valour."

Fair Emmeline waited trembling with fear and grief while her lover and the churlish knight did battle. The Child of Elle fought so valiantly that he soon slew the churlish knight. But the Baron and all his men rapidly drew near. Ah, what was to be done? It was vain to fly.

Her lover put his horn to his mouth, and blew a loud, shrill blast, and soon he saw his own merry men come riding over the hill.

"Now, hold thy hand, thou bold Baron; tear not ruthlessly apart two gentle hearts," cried the Child of Elle. "For many a long day I have loved thy daughter dearly, and sought to wed her as my wife. I pray thee consent that she may be mine, and bless a faithful pair! My lands and livings are not small: my house and family are noble. My mother was an earl's daughter, my sire was a noble knight——"

But the Baron frowned and turned away in wrath.

The beautiful Lady Emmeline sighed and wept, and stood trembling; then she sank down on her knee, and seized the Baron's uplifted hand.

"Pardon this fair young knight and me, my lord and dear father!" she besought. "Trust me, but for that churlish knight who wished to force me to marry him, I would never have fled from you. How often have you called me your darling and your joy! Oh, do not then let your harsh resolves destroy your daughter!"

The Baron stroked his sunburnt cheek, and turned aside his head, striving proudly to hide the tears that rose unbidden to his eyes. He stood musing for a while in



"He mounted himself on his steed so tall,
And her on a fair palfrey;
And slung his hugle about his neck,
And roundly they rode away."

The Child of Elle

deep thought ; then he raised Emmeline from the ground, and embraced her tenderly.

“ Here, take her, Child of Elle,” he said, placing her lily white hand in that of the knight. “ Here, take my dear and only child, and with her half my land. Thy father wronged my honour once in days of youthful pride ; do thou repair the injury in fondness for thy wife. And as thou love her and hold her dear, Heaven prosper thee and thine !”

And so the Baron gave his blessing to his dear daughter, the lovely Emmeline, and her faithful knight, the Child of Elle.

The Merchant's Daughter of Bristol



ANY years ago there lived in Bristol a rich merchant who had an only daughter. Near by dwelt a gallant youth who had for many years loved the maiden. Maudlin, for that was her name, loved him faithfully in return, but all her friends were against him, for though of noble character the young man was very poor, having by ill-fortune lost all his possessions. Seeing that nothing he could do would ever win their favour Osmond at last determined to travel into strange lands, hoping by this means to dull the edge of his sorrow.

Knowing he would never be allowed to see and speak openly with the merchant's daughter he adopted the following plan in order to take farewell of her. Lute in hand he went and stood under her chamber window, and began to play and sing the sweetest music. Anyone seeing him might have imagined he was one of the strolling minstrels of whom there were so many in those days, but the one hearer who listened in her lonely room

The Merchant's Daughter

above knew that the song was meant for her, and understood the meaning of the words.

"Farewell," he sang, "farewell, mine own true love. Farewell, my dear and chiefest treasure of my heart. Through fortune's spite I am forced to part from thee. I go into the land of Italy. There will I mourn and weary out my woeful days. Since my own true love is kept from me I care no longer to live. Fair Bristol town, adieu, for Padua shall now be my dwelling-place, although my true love lodges in thee, to whom alone I vow my heart."

This he sang with bitter sighs and tears, and then he struck the strings of the lyre in one despairing chord—"Farewell, sweet love, for evermore!"

Maudlin from her window high above beheld her lover where he stood singing and making sweet music below, but not a word dared she reply for fear of her parents' anger. The whole of that wretched night she spent in tears, longing to be with her faithful Osmond, even though they were cast forth penniless to face the world. She blamed her friends who had caused their separation, and she blamed the spitefulness of fortune that had wrought so luckless an ending to their love. Finally she vowed in her heart to forsake country and kinsfolk, and to follow her true love whither he had gone, abiding all chances that might befall whether for good or evil.

At last the weary night wore to an end, and the first gleam of dawn appeared. While it was still very early in the morning Maudlin rose, and made her way to the lower portion of the house where her father was accustomed to transact his business. Being a very wealthy merchant he had a wide trade with many foreign countries

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and the house was always thronged with mariners and masters of vessels who came to speak with him on matters of business.

On the present occasion Maudlin found several seamen in the hall, and among them she espied a master mariner, or captain of a ship, who was waiting to see her father, if that were possible. His frank and honest bearing struck her at once, and encouraged her to put her trust in him, and, going forward, she held out her hand.

"Good sir," she said, "do you wish to speak to anyone here?"

"Fair maid," he answered, "it is for that reason I am waiting."

"Then, gentle sir, I pray you come with me."

She led the seaman apart into a pleasant little parlour near, and then to his astonishment she fell on her knees before him and burst into tears.

"Good sir," she cried, "have pity on a sorrowing woman, and prove yourself a faithful friend to me, so that I may tell you my grief."

Taking compassion on her evident despair, and touched by her trust in him, the seaman replied :

"Since you repose your trust in me who am not only unknown to you, but even a stranger in the town, be assured, gentle lady, I will always keep it most faithfully."

"I have a brother," said Maudlin, "whom I love better than my life ; he is in Padua, alas, very sick, and like to die. I am longing to see him, but my father will not let me go. Therefore, dear sir, be good to me, and grant me this favour. Pray bring me some ship-boy's garment that I may get away disguised from here, and I will go



"She falls upon her tender knee :

'Good sir,' said she, 'now pity you a woman's woe,
And prove a faithful friend to me,
That I my grief to you may show.'"

The Merchant's Daughter

off to sea with you if you will only grant me this much favour."

"Fair maid, here is my hand," said the captain. "I will do everything you wish, and will set you safe in the country and at the place you require."

Maudlin was overjoyed at the thought of once more finding her beloved Osmond, and warmly thanked the stranger for granting her request.

"If you will take me I will be your servant, gallant master," she said, "and will ever prove your faithful friend for this. Then do not forget me, sweet master."

All being settled, as far as they could arrange, one day soon after, very early in the morning before the break of day, the mariner brought Maudlin some garments such as those worn by ship-boys, and in these she quickly arrayed herself. She cut off her flowing locks, and stained her skin to look as if it were tanned by the sun, and in the brown-faced lad in rough seaman's clothes no one would have recognised the wealthy merchant's daughter. Before her father rose she slipped downstairs to meet her master as he stood in the hall, and there she waited, apparently in attendance on him, till her father summoned him to speak on matters of business.

But before the merchant could finish all he had to say down came his wife in a state of terrible distress.

"Oh, husband," she cried weeping, "our daughter has gone! Our daughter has gone!"

"Gone?" echoed the merchant, starting in amazement. "Ah, then it is yonder vile wretch who has enticed away my child! But I shall find him, I wot, at Padua in Italy."

At that up spoke the mariner.

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“Worshipful master,” he said respectfully, “so please you, this pretty youth is going to Padua ; he will perform anything you wish, and write you the truth.”

“If that be so, sweet youth,” quoth the merchant, “pray carry a letter from me to the English merchants there, and I will pay you richly for this service. I very much fear for the welfare of my daughter.”

Then the merchant’s wife took the ship-boy by the hand, and through Maudlin’s strange disguise she never knew she was speaking to her own child.

“Fair youth,” she said, “if you see my daughter let me know at once, and there are twenty crowns for thee.”

Maudlin promised to do what they asked, and then quietly taking leave of her parents followed her master. They embarked at once, and a merry wind soon wafted them from the shores of England.

They sailed for many days, sometimes in fair weather with a favouring wind, and sometimes over stormy seas blown and battered by tempest. At last one day the master mariner called to Maudlin, and bade her rejoice, for the rough voyage was over, and the pleasant land of Italy was in sight.

Then Maudlin thanked the good mariner for all the kindness he had shown her.

“You have been a faithful friend in sorrow,” she said. “Should fortune ever smile on me I will show you how grateful my heart is.” Then she looked with eager gaze at the shores they were rapidly approaching. “Blessed be the land where my love dwells,” she exclaimed. “I am ready now for any chance that may betide ; I will

The Merchant's Daughter

shun no trial to prove my love and devotion. With thankful heart I will trudge every foot of the way to see the town where my darling lives. I will seek him out in every part, and never rest until I find him."

Then the brave mariner declared he would never forsake Maudlin in her sorrow, but would go with her wherever she went, sharing her weal and her woe, until he brought her safe to Padua.

After many weary steps at last they arrived in safety at this city. Maudlin's heart leaped with gladness, and she forgot all her past sorrow in the joyful thought that she would now soon behold again her faithful lover. But terrible news awaited them.

The young Osmond was indeed at Padua, but at this moment he was in prison, condemned to die, unless he would change his religion. But rather than do this he vowed to be burned alive.

Now all Maudlin's joy was turned to sorrow, but her grief was of no avail—young Osmond must die. She longed to see him, but there was no means of getting inside the prison, and there seemed no way of even sending a message to him. All she could do was to hover round the prison walls, and there through a little grated window overhead she heard the captive's lamentations, and his piteous entreaties for a little food, for he was well-nigh starving.

As she thus lingered she could even distinguish the words he said.

"Farewell for evermore, sweet England!" he sighed. "Farewell all my friends who knew me when I was happy in Bristol town! But most of all, farewell, my own true

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love, my sweetest Maudlin ! Never more shall I see thee, woe to thy most unkind father. Oh, if thou wert only here to close these wretched eyes with thy dear hands how well it would be for me. Then would my torments appear easy, and my soul would joyfully scale the skies."

When Maudlin heard her lover's lamentations her heart was filled with sorrow. She longed to speak with him, but knew no means of doing so, his captivity was so severe. At last a plan occurred to her. She put off her lad's attire, and dressed herself neatly and plainly as a maiden, and in this guise she was fortunate enough to obtain a post as serving-maid in the house of the judge who had condemned Osmond to death.

Here she did her duty so well, and behaved herself so prudently, that she won the favour of her master, who by-and-by actually fell in love with the gentle English maiden. He declared that if she would only grant him her favour in return she might ask of him anything she could devise, and he would willingly grant it.

In reply to this Maudlin said she had a brother in Padua who was condemned to die for his religion ; at that moment he was lying in prison oppressed with grief and misery.

"Grant me my brother's life," she said, "and I will give you my love and gratitude."

But this, alas, the judge could not grant. He shook his head sadly.

"That may not be, fair maid," he said ; "unless he will change his religion he must die."

Then Maudlin thought of a plan for getting a message conveyed to Osmond.

The Merchant's Daughter

“There is an English friar in Padua, of great learning and extremely good,” she said. “Let him be sent to my brother, and perhaps with his wise counsel he will persuade him to yield.”

The judge was willing to agree to this, so Maudlin hurried away to her good friend, the master mariner, who had refused to leave Padua in case he might be at any time of service to her. The mariner at once dressed himself in friar's garb, and in this guise he was admitted into the prison, where he conveyed to Osmond a letter from Maudlin.

It may well be imagined how surprised and enraptured the poor captive was to read the loving words, and to learn that his own dear lady was so near at hand. The mariner, too, was quite ready to recount at full length the dangerous enterprise Maudlin had undertaken for his sake, and all the perils and hardships she had endured on the way. But joyful as he was to think of her being so near, Osmond was too unselfish to allow her to run the risk of any further peril by remaining in a position of so much danger. His chief thought was for her, and he urged the friar to make her fly from Italy at once.

“Here is no place for her—only woeful death and danger to her innocent life,” he exclaimed. “See how I have been betrayed for professing the truth, and the end will be that I shall be burnt at the stake. For before I will consent to deny my faith I will yield my body to the flames.”

“Oh, sir, for the sake of your sweet lady, recant, and save your life, which is so dear to her,” implored the mariner.

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"A woeful match is made when Christ is lost to win a wife," said young Osmond with noble fidelity

No arguments his visitor could use would tempt the young captive to swerve from his steadfast resolution, and the mariner had presently to return to Maudlin, and carry her the tidings that his mission had been of no avail.

Having wrought in vain all possible means that might be to save Osmond's life, and finding that everything was hopeless, Maudlin then claimed from the judge the right to die with her lover. When no persuasion could prevail to make her change her mind or shake her resolution in any way, at last she was condemned to die, and one fire was prepared for them both.

The day of doom arrived, and the judges and the people collected to see the lovers die. Arm in arm they came forth from the prison, and with a firm step and joyful countenance walked to the fire. Close behind them came their friend, the master mariner, who refused to forsake them, and who was the faithful partner of all their woe. Such steadfast love and loyalty and such devoted friendship softened even the stern hearts of the judges. At the last moment came an order to spare their lives, and soon after they were despatched back to England.

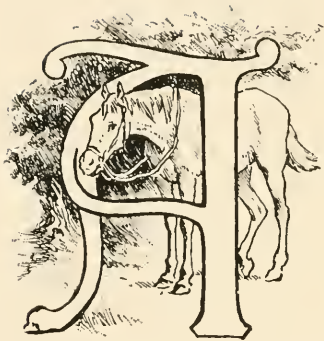
Now all their sorrow was turned to joy, and the faithful lovers had their hearts' desire. They had borne themselves nobly in trouble and adversity, and now they were rewarded with prosperity and gladness.

They reached England safely, and in due course arrived at Bristol. Great were the rejoicings of their friends when they heard of all the perils the voyagers had passed through. Maudlin's parents were so glad to have their

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daughter back that they no longer refused to allow her to marry Osmond. The wedding took place with much splendour, and to do honour to the master mariner who had so faithfully befriended her, Maudlin begged him on this occasion to act as her father, and to give her away in church. This was done as she wished, and all good people rejoiced at the happy ending to the troubles of the merchant's daughter.

Saddle to Rags



SILLY old man was one day going to pay his rent. He lived in the dales of Yorkshire, and as he was riding along on his old mare Tib on a lonely piece of the high-road he was overtaken by a gentleman thief.

“Well overtaken, old man !

Well overtaken !” cried the thief in a genial manner.

“Thank you kindly, sir,” said the old man. “If you care for my company we might go together.”

“How far are you going this way ?” asked the thief.

“To tell you the truth, kind sir,” said the other smiling amiably, “I’m just going two miles. I’m only a simple old man who farms a piece of land. My half-year’s rent, kind sir, just comes to forty pounds. But my landlord has been away from home. I’ve not seen him for twelve months or more, so that makes my rent quite a large sum ; I have to pay him exactly eighty pounds.”

The rogue chuckled inwardly to hear the simple old fellow babble on in this style.

“You should not have told anyone that,” he said in

Saddle to Rags

pretended reproof, "there are a great many thieves going about. If they happened to meet you they would rob you of every penny."

"Oh, never mind, I'm not in the least afraid of thieves," said the old man with an air of cunning. "My money is quite safe ; it is tucked away in bags in this old saddle on which I ride."

Thus talking, the farmer and the thief jogged along quietly together till presently the road passed through a gully or ravine. Here the thief whipped out a pistol from his pocket, and pointing it at the old man's head bade him stand still and hand over his money.

But the old man was crafty. Before the rogue could stop he had flung his old saddle over the hedge.

"Go and fetch it if you want any," he cried.

The thief jumped down in haste, and bade the old man hold his horse while he ran to look for the moneybags. No sooner was he the other side of the hedge than the old man popped his foot in the stirrup, leaped on the horse, and was off at full gallop. No need to bid him ride fast. In vain the thief ran and roared after him :

"Stay, oh stay, and you shall have half my share !"

"Nay, marry, not I !" called back the old man. "For once I've bitten a knave."

The rogue knew it was no use to try to overtake the farmer, for his own horse was much fleeter than poor old Tib, who had been left behind. He thought, therefore, the best plan would be to make sure of the moneybags. He ran back to the old saddle, and turned and twisted it, but no bags could he find. "They must be sewn up inside," he said to himself. He drew his rusty sword

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and hacked and hewed till the poor old saddle was chopped to rags, but not one penny piece could he find.

In the meantime the old farmer galloped and galloped till he was quite exhausted, but at last he came to the landlord's house. He paid him the year's rent, and then he opened the rogue's portmanteau. There was a fine sight, to be sure! Five hundred pounds in silver, and five hundred pounds in gold!

The landlord stared in astonishment when he saw all this money.

"Where did you get all that silver and gold?" he asked.

"Oh, I met a silly fool by the way, and swopped horses with him," said the old man carelessly. "But never mind, I've got the better of him."

"That's a lucky stroke for you," said the landlord. "You will be able to take things easily now; you are getting cramped and old, and not fit to travel about."

"That's all right," said the farmer. "Now I can give these old bones a rest."

Then taking leave of the landlord he started for home on the rogue's horse. He saw no trace of the highwayman but as he was riding down a narrow lane he spied his own old mare tied to a tree.

"Hullo, old lass, now you can go home," he said, unloosing her, and old Tib trotted straight away to her own stable without more ado.

When the farmer got home, and told his old wife what he had done she was so pleased she ran to put on her best clothes, and sang and danced about the house.



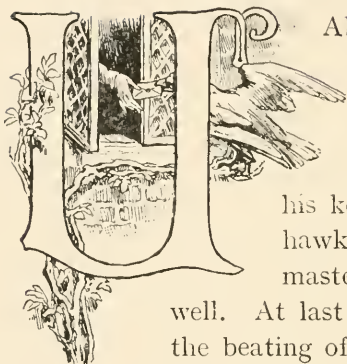
“As they were riding along,
And riding a-down a ghyll,
The thief pulled out a pistol
And bade the old man stand still.”

Saddle to Rags

“If ever our daughter gets wed,” she said, “it will help to enlarge her portion.”

As for the gentleman-thief he never dared show his face in that part of the world again, for he was enraged to think how a clever rogue like himself had been outwitted by a silly old man.

The Gay Goss-Hawk



AND down the castle ramparts paced Lord William. His cheek was pale and worn, and ever as his longing gaze looked southward tears filled his keen grey eyes. His favourite hawk fluttered uneasily around its master, well knowing all was not well. At last Lord William was aware of the beating of its wings, and at his call the faithful bird came and perched on his wrist.

“Alas, alas, my gay goss-hawk!” said Lord William, as he gently stroked it. “How smooth and glossy are your feathers!”

“And alas, alas, my dear master!” replied the hawk, “how pale and lean you look! Have you at tournament lost your spear or your sword? Or do you mourn for the southern lass whom you may never come near?”

“I have not lost my spear at tournament, nor yet my sword,” said Lord William, “but I mourn sorely for my true love whom I may never come near. Oh, well for me, my gay goss-hawk, you can both speak and fly. You shall carry a letter to my love, and bring me back an answer.”

The Gay Goss-Hawk

“But how shall I find your true love, and how shall I know her?” asked the hawk. “My tongue never yet spoke with her, nor my eye saw her.”

“Oh, you will well know my true love as soon as you see her,” said Lord William, “for of all the fair flowers of England she is the fairest. The red on her cheeks is like the blood drops on the snow, the white of her breast is like the down of the white seamew. By her bower-door there grows a flowering birch, and as she goes to kirk you must sit thereon and sing. Four-and-twenty ladies will go to the kirk, but you will very well know my lady, for she will be the fairest of them all.”

So Lord William wrote a love-letter, and placed it under the grey pinion of the hawk, and away fled the bird as fast as wings could go. Over the lonely moorland and the foaming torrents and the heather-covered hills he sped till he crossed the Border, and came into southern land. And there not far away he spied a fair castle, and at the door of the ladies’ bower grew a flowering birch, and by this token he knew he had found his quest.

At tha time there was perpetual feud, if not open warfare, between the families who lived on the borders of England and Scotland. Even if peace were patched up for a time it never lasted long, and a family south of the Border would allow no northern suitor to claim the hand of daughter or sister. So Alison Armstrong was forbidden to think of the grey-eyed Scottish lord who had won her girlish love, and her seven bold brothers kept watch and ward that no message from him should ever reach her.

But the grey hawk flying south could pass where no mail-clad warrior would be allowed to tread. The

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watchman on the tower barely noted his flight, and the warder at the gate lifted no spear to forbid his entry. The hawk flew over the outer defences of moat and bastion, and came to the inner pleasaunce, a green space with flowers and shrubs, enclosed between high walls, where the ladies of the household had their dwelling chambers. At the entrance grew a flowering birch, and there the hawk sat himself and began to sing.

By-and-by the door opened, and out came four-and-twenty maidens. Young and gracious and comely they walked to kirk, but as soon as he saw them the hawk knew the lady for whom Lord William meant the letter, for Alison was the fairest of them all, and the flower that springs in May was not so sweet as she.

The next day the hawk alighted at the gate, and seating himself on the latch again began to sing a song of love. As he sang, the sounds inside the castle gradually grew less until those within were aware of the bird at the gate. And first he sang a low note, and then he sang clear and shrill, and always the burden of his song was : “ Your love cannot get here.”

By-and-by Alison, who sat at supper with her ladies, noticed the bird who sang so strangely and persistently outside. She rose from table, but bade her companions keep their seats.

“ Feast on, my maidens,” she said, “ feast on, and make merry while I go to the little window over there to hear yon bonny bird’s song.”

Then, stealing to the lattice she leaned out, and looked wistfully at the hawk, who came and perched on the sill.

“ Sing on, sing on, my bonny bird,” she whispered.

The Gay Goss-Hawk

"Sing the song you sang yester eve. For well I know by your sweet song that you have seen my true love."

Then the hawk sang on. And first he sang a merry song of a gallant northern knight and a noble southern lady, and how they loved each other although their races were at feud. And then he sang a sorrowful song of how the knight and the lady were parted, and how the knight might never more come near his true love, and how he sighed for her day and night, and grew lean and pale with grief and longing.

And then the hawk pecked his grey feathers, and bringing out the letter gave it to the lady.

"There is a letter from Lord William," he said. "He says he has sent you three before. He can wait no longer for your love ; he is dying for your sake."

Then the colour rushed all over Alison's face for joy, and the light sprang into her eyes.

"Go bid him bake bread and brew ale for the bridal," she said. "I will meet him at St. Mary's Kirk long, long before it is stale."

Then Alison went to her chamber moaning and sighing, as if she were suddenly taken very ill and were about to die. Her father was summoned in haste, but no remedies seemed of any avail.

"A boon, a boon, dear father, I beg of thee a boon," she besought the stern old man.

"Ask not that haughty Scottish lord, for him thou shalt never see," answered her father. "Anything else you may ask it shall be granted you."

"Then even if I die in southern land at least take and bury me in Scottish ground," begged the lady.

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“And this shall be the way of it. The first Scottish kirk you come to, you shall have mass sung there, and the next Scottish kirk that you come to, you shall have the bells rung. And when you come to St. Mary’s Kirk you shall tarry there till night.”

Her father plighted his word that all should be done as she asked, and having given his promise left his daughter.

As soon as she was alone she ran to her bower, and drank a sleeping draught which she had carefully mixed. So by-and-by when they came to look for her they found her lying cold and still with no breath or motion. Her rosy cheeks which had been so fresh and blooming were now ashen grey, and she seemed to be as surely dead as anyone could be.

Her old grey-headed father came and lamented over her, and her seven sisters wept, but her cruel step-mother spoke no word of sorrow.

“Take some burning lead, and drop a drop on her bosom,” she ordered, “to try if she be really dead or not.”

So they took a drop of boiling lead, and dropped it on her breast, but she neither moved nor moaned.

“Alas, alas!” cried her father, “she is dead indeed.”

Then her seven brothers rose up and hewed a bier for her. They hewed it out of a solid oak, and overlaid it with shining silver. And her seven sisters sewed a pall for her; the pall was of white silk, and every stitch they put in they sewed to it a silver bell.

When all was ready and the Lady Alison placed on the bier the seven brothers set out with it to bury their sister, as she had entreated, in Scottish ground.



“‘Set down, set down the bier,’ he said,
‘Till I look her upon;’
But as soon as Lord William touched her hand.
Her colour began to come.”

The Gay Goss-Hawk

The first Scottish kirk they came to, they had the mass sung ; and the next Scottish kirk they came to, they had the bells rung. But when they came to St. Mary's Kirk there stood spearmen all in a row, and up started Lord William, the chieftain of them all.

"Set down the bier until I look upon her," he said, and the seven brothers did as he commanded.

But as soon as Lord William touched her hand the life came back to her ; she brightened like a lily flower till all the paleness was gone ; the light came back to her eyes, and the roses to her cheek and lips.

"A morsel of your bread and one glass of your wine, my lord, for I have fasted for your sake and mine these three long days," she said, smiling at her lover. "Go home, my seven bold brothers, go home, and blow your horn. Little cared you for the sorrow you would have brought me, but instead I have brought scorn on you. Commend me to my father, who wished my soul good rest, but woe to my cruel step-mother who had me burnt with boiling lead."

"And woe to you, deceitful woman, may all ill befall you," cried the brothers, furious that they had thus been baffled. "For we have left father and sisters at home breaking their hearts for you."

And they turned and rode away in wrath back across the Border, but the lady went with her lover to his home in Scotland, and there they were married, and lived many happy years.

Robin Hood and His Merry Men

Robin Hood and the Knight



THE days of Richard I. there lived a famous outlaw who was known by the name of Robin Hood. He was born at Locksley in the county of Nottingham, and was of noble origin, for he is often spoken of as "Earl of Huntingdon." Robin was of a wild and daring disposition, and having placed his life in jeopardy

by some reckless act, or possibly through some political offence, he fled for refuge to the greenwood. His chief haunts were Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire, and Barnsdale in Yorkshire. Round him soon flocked a band of trusty followers. An old chronicler states that Robin Hood "entertained an hundred tall men and good archers." They robbed none but the rich, and killed no man except in self-defence. Robin "suffered no woman to be oppressed or otherwise molested ; poor

Robin Hood and His Merry Men

men's goods he spared, abundantly relieving them" with spoils got from abbeys or the houses of rich people.

Robin Hood's exploits were widely known, and although the poorer classes were all on his side, those in authority were naturally incensed against him. Many attempts were made to seize him, and large rewards were offered for his capture. He was often in danger of his life, and had many narrow escapes, but so daring was his courage, and so quick and clever his wit and resource that he always contrived to get clear away.

An old tradition says that the father of Robin was a forester, a renowned archer. On one occasion he shot for a wager against the three gallant yeomen of the north country—Adam Bell, Clym-of-the-Clough, and William of Cloudesly, and the forester beat all three of them.

The mother of Robin Hood was a niece of the famous Guy, Earl of Warwick, who slew the blue boar; her brother was Gamwel of Great Gamwel Hall, a squire of famous degree, and the owner of one of the finest houses in Nottinghamshire.

When the other outlaws flocked to Robin Hood they begged him to tell them what sort of life they were to lead, and where they were to go, what they were to take and what to leave, what sort of people they were to rob, and whom they were to beat and to bind—in short, how they were to act in every circumstance.

"Have no fear, we shall do very well," answered Robin. "But look you do no harm to any husbandman that tilleth with his plough, nor to any good yeoman that walketh in the greenwood, nor to any knight or

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squire who is a good fellow. And harm no folk in whose company is any woman.

“But fat rascals and abbots, and all who have got rich by pilfering, canting, and cheating, those you may beat and bind, and hold captive for ransom. And chiefly the Sheriff of Nottingham—look you, bear him well in mind.”

And his followers promised to pay heed to his words, and carry them out carefully.

Chief among the band of outlaws known as “Robin Hood’s merry men” was “Little John,” so called because his name was John Little, and he was seven feet high. Robin Hood was about twenty years old when he first came to know Little John, and they got acquainted in this way. Robin was walking one day in the forest when coming near a brook he chanced to spy a stranger, a strong lusty lad like himself. The two met in the middle of a long narrow bridge, and neither would give way. They quarrelled as to which should be the master, and finally agreed to fight with stout staves on the bridge, and whichever fell into the water the other was to be declared to have won. The encounter was a stiff one, but finally the stranger knocked down Robin Hood, and tumbled him into the brook. Robin bore no malice, but owned at once the other had got the best of it, and seeing what a stout nimble fellow he was persuaded him to join his band of archers, and go and live with them in the greenwood.

Next to Little John the chief man was Will Scarlet, who in reality was Robin’s own cousin or nephew, young Gamwel of Gamwel Hall. Having slain his father’s

Robin Hood and His Merry Men

steward, either by accident or in some brawl, young Will fled to his kinsman, Robin Hood, in Sherwood Forest, where, as in the case of Little John, he first made his acquaintance by fighting with him. As young Will on this occasion happened to be dressed very smartly in silken doublet and scarlet stockings Robin Hood dubbed him "Will Scarlet," by which name he was always afterwards known.

Besides these two famous outlaws there were many others of lesser note who from time to time joined the band. Among them may be mentioned "Gilbert of the white hand," who was almost as good an archer as Robin himself; Allen-a-Dale, whose bride Robin Hood helped him to secure; Much, the son of a miller; George-a-Green; Friar Tuck; Will Stutely, who was taken prisoner by the Sheriff of Nottingham and nearly hanged, but was rescued from the gallows by the gallant yeomen; Arthur-a-Bland, the sturdy tanner of Nottingham, who beat Robin when they fought with staves; the jolly tinker of Banbury who went out to arrest Robin, but ended by joining his band, and the chief Ranger of Sherwood Forest, who did the same.

Lastly, there was the bonny maid of noble degree, who was known in the north country as Maid Marian. She had loved Robin Hood when they were young together, in the days when he was still the Earl of Huntingdon, but spiteful fortune forced them to part. Robin had to fly for refuge to the greenwood, and Maid Marian, unable to live without him, dressed herself like a page, with quiver and bow, sword and buckler, and went in search of him. Long and wearily she ranged the forest,

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and when the lovers met they did not know each other, for Robin, too, had been obliged to disguise himself. They fought as foes, and so sore was the fray that both were wounded, but Robin so much admired the valour of the stranger lad that he bade him hold his hand, and asked him to join his company. When Marian knew the voice of her lover she quickly made herself known to him, and great was the rejoicing. A stately banquet was quickly prepared, which was served in a shady bower, and they feasted merrily, while all the tall and comely yeomen drank to the health of Robin Hood's bride. So for many years they dwelt together with great content in the greenwood.

It happened one day as Robin Hood stood under a tree in Barnsdale that Little John went up to him, and said :

“ Master, if you would dine soon would it not be well ? ”

“ I do not care to dine,” answered Robin, “ until I have some bold baron or stranger guest to eat with us, or else some rich rascal who will pay for the feast, or else some knight or squire who dwells in these parts.”

“ It is already far on in the day ; now heaven send us a guest soon, so that we may get to dinner,” said Little John.

“ Take thy good bow in thy hand,” said Robin, “ and let Will Scarlet and Much go with thee, and walk up to the Sayles and so to Watling Street. There wait for some strange guest whom it may very well chance you will meet. Be it earl or baron, or abbot or knight, bring him here to lodge ; his dinner shall be ready for him.”

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So these three good yeomen, Little John, Will Scarlet, and Much went off to the great high road which is known as Watling Street, and there they looked east and they looked west, but not a man could they see. But as they looked in Barnsdale, by a little private path there came a knight riding, whom they soon met. Very dreary and woebegone seemed this traveller; one foot was in the stirrup, the other dangled outside; his hood hung down over his eyes; his attire was poor and shabby; no sorrier man than he ever rode on a summer's day.

Little John bent low in courtesy before him.

"Welcome, sir knight! Welcome to greenwood! I am right glad to see you. My master hath awaited you fasting these three hours."

"Who is your master?" asked the knight.

"Robin Hood, sir," answered Little John.

"He is a brave yeoman; I have heard much good of him," said the knight. "I will go in company with you, my comrades. My purpose was to have dined to-day at Blyth or Doncaster."

So the knight went with the yeomen, but his face was still sad and careworn, and tears often fell from his eyes. Little John and Will Scarlet brought him to the door of the lodge in Barnsdale where the outlaws were staying at that time, and as soon as Robin saw him he lifted his hood courteously, and bent low in token of respect.

"Welcome, sir knight, welcome. I am right glad to see you. I have awaited you fasting, sir, for the last three hours."

"God save thee, good Robin, and all thy fair company," returned the knight pleasantly.

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Robin brought clear water from the well for the guest to wash himself from the dust of travel, and then they sat down to dinner. The meal was spread under the trees in the greenwood, and rarely had the stranger seen a repast so amply furnished. Bread and wine they had in plenty, and dainty portions of deer, swans and pheasants, plump and tender, and all kinds of waterfowl from the river, and every sort of woodland bird that was good for eating.

Robin heaped his guest's plate with choice morsels, and bade him fall to merrily.

"Eat well, sir knight, eat well," he urged him.

"Thanks, thanks," said the knight. "I have not had such a dinner as this for three weeks. If I come again into this country, Robin, I will make as good a dinner for you as you have made for me."

"Thanks for my dinner, good knight, when I have it," returned the outlaw. "I was never so greedy as to crave for dinner. But before you go, would it not be seemly for you to pay for what you have eaten? It was never the custom for a yeoman to pay for a knight."

"I have nothing in my coffers that I can proffer, for shame," said the knight.

"Go, Little John, and look," said Robin. "Now swear to me that you are telling the truth," he added to his guest.

"I swear to you, by heaven, I have no more than ten shillings," said the knight.

"If you have no more than that I will not take one penny," said Robin. "And if you have need of any more I will lend it you. Go now, Little John, and tell me the



“Welcome be thou to Greenwood,
Gentle Knight, and free;
My master hath abiden you fasting,
Sir, all these hours three.”

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truth. If there be no more than ten shillings, not one penny of that will I touch."

Little John spread out his mantle on the ground ready to hold any treasure he might find, but when he looked in the knight's coffer he saw nothing but one piece of money of the value of half a pound. He left it lying where it was, and went to tell his master.

"What tidings, John?" asked Robin.

"Sir, the knight is true enough."

"Fill a cup with the best wine, and hand it first to the knight," said Robin. "Sir, I much wonder that your clothing is so thin. Tell me one thing, I pray. I trow you must have been made a knight by force, or else you have squandered your means by reckless or riotous living? Perhaps you have been foolish and thriftless, or else have lost all your money in brawling and strife? Or possibly you have been a usurer or a drunkard, or wasted your life in wickedness and wrong-doing?"

"I am none of those things, by heaven that made me," declared the knight. "For a hundred years my ancestors have been knights. It has often befallen, Robin, that a man may be disgraced, but God who waits in heaven above can amend his state. Within two or three years, my neighbours knew it well, I could spend with ease four hundred pounds of good money. Now I have no goods left, but my wife and my children. God has ordained this until He see fit to better my condition."

"In what manner did you lose your riches?" asked Robin.

"By my great folly and kindness," was the answer. "I had a son, who should have been my heir. At twenty

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years old he could joust right well in the field. Unhappily the luckless boy slew a knight of Lancashire, and to pay the heavy penalty exacted from him to save his rights I was forced to sell all my goods. Besides this, Robin, my lands are pledged until a certain day to a rich Abbot living close by here at St. Mary's Abbey."

"What is the sum?" asked Robin.

"Sir, four hundred pounds, which the Abbot lent me."

"Now, if you lose your land what will become of you?" asked Robin.

"I will depart in haste over the salt sea to Palestine. Farewell, friend, there is no better way." Tears filled the knight's eyes, and he made a movement to go. "Farewell, friends, farewell! I have no more that I can pay you."

But Robin stopped him as he would have gone.

"Where are your friends?" he asked.

"Sir, there are none who will know me now. When I was rich enough at home they were glad to come and flatter me, but now they all run from me. They take no more heed of me than if they had never seen me."

The knight's sorrowful story so touched the hearts of Little John and Will Scarlet that they wept for pity.

"Come, fill of the best wine," cried Robin. "Come, sir, courage! Never be downcast! Have you any friends from whom you can borrow?"

"None," replied the knight.

"Come forth, Little John, and go to my treasury," said Robin. "Bring me four hundred pounds, and look that you count it out carefully."

Then forth went Little John, and with him went Will

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Scarlet, and he counted out four hundred pounds. But Much, the miller's son, did not look very well pleased to see all this money going into the hands of a stranger.

"Is this wisely done?" he muttered.

"What grieves you?" said Little John. "It is alms to help a noble knight who has fallen into poverty. Master," he went on to Robin Hood, "his clothing is full thin; you must give the knight a suit of raiment to wrap himself in. For you have scarlet and green cloth, master, and plenty of rich apparel. I dare well say there is no merchant in England who has a finer store."

"Give him three yards of cloth of every colour," said Robin Hood, "and see that it be well meted out."

Little John took no other measure than his bow, and every handful he measured he leapt over three feet.

"What devilkin's draper do you think you are?" asked little Much in half-angry astonishment.

Will Scarlet stood still and laughed.

"John may well give him good measure," he said. "It cost *him* but light."

Little John paid no heed to their scoffing, but quietly went on with his task.

"Master," he said to Robin Hood, when he had put aside a bountiful store for their guest, "you must give the knight a horse to carry home all these goods."

"Give him a grey courser, and put a new saddle on it," said Robin.

"And a good palfrey as befits his rank," added little Much.

"And a pair of boots, for he is a noble knight," said Will Scarlet.

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"And what will you give him, Little John?" asked Robin.

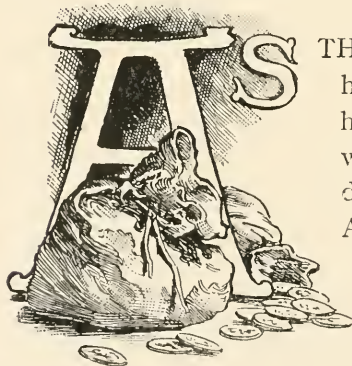
"Sir, a pair of shining gilt spurs to pray for all this company. God bring him safely out of all his trouble."

The poor knight scarcely knew how to thank them for all their goodness.

"When shall the day be for me to pay back the money you have lent me?" he said. "What is your will?"

"This day twelve month under this greenwood tree," said Robin. "It were a great shame," he added, "for a knight to ride alone without squire, yeoman, or page to walk by his side. I will lend you my man, Little John, to be your lad. He may stand you in yeoman stead if ever you are in need."

How the Knight went to St. Mary's Abbey



THE knight went on his way he thought how well matters had happened for him, and when he looked on Barnsdale he blessed Robin Hood. And when he thought of Will Scarlet, Much, and Little John he blessed them for the best company he had ever been in.

"To-morrow I must go to York town to St. Mary's Abbey," he said to Little John, "and to the Abbot of

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that place I have to pay four hundred pounds. If I am not there by to-morrow night my lands will be lost for ever."

The next day the Abbot of St. Mary's went to the convent.

"This day twelve months ago there came a knight, and borrowed four hundred pounds," he said to the prior. "He borrowed this money upon all his free land. Unless he comes this very day to pay it back he will be disinherited."

"It is full early, the day is not yet far gone," said the prior. "I would rather pay a hundred pounds and lay it down at once than that the good knight should lose his land. He is far away beyond the seas, and suffers hunger and cold, and many weary nights. It were great pity to take his land, and if you are so light of conscience you do him much wrong."

But the Abbot was a very different man from the prior.

"You are for ever in my way and thwarting whatever I do," he cried angrily, and as he spoke in came a fat-headed monk, who acted as high cellarer or steward, his duty being to look after the provisions for the abbey.

"The knight is dead or hanged, and we shall have in this place another four hundred pounds a year to spend," said this man with callous complacency, as he thought of the knight's broad acres all falling into the clutch of the wealthy abbey.

The Abbot and the steward then started off boldly for the High Justice of York whom the Abbot had engaged

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to act for him in the matter. The Justice and many other men of law with him had taken the matter of the knight's debts wholly into their own hands, and were determined to put him in the wrong. The Abbot and his retinue judged the knight most severely.

"Unless he comes this very day he shall be disinherited," they said.

"He won't come yet awhile, I dare undertake to answer for that," said the Justice.

But in sorry time for them all the knight arrived at the gate.

"Put on your poor clothing that you brought from beyond the seas," he had instructed his attendants, and so it was in this shabby, worn-out array they came to St. Mary's Abbey.

The porter was ready, and bade them all welcome.

"Welcome, sir knight, my lord is at table, and many a gentleman with him, all for love of thee. By heaven, that is the best harnessed horse that ever I saw," he added hastily, as he noticed the grey courser which Robin Hood had given the knight. "Lead the horses into the stable that they may be eased," he said to the men who had accompanied him.

"No, by heaven they shall not come inside the building," said the knight.

In the Abbot's hall a fine company sat at dinner, the Abbot, the High Justice, the Sheriff, and other lords. The knight went in, and saluted them on his bent knee in the fashion of the times.

"Do gladly, Sir Abbot," he said in the customary form of greeting. "I am come to hold my day."

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“Have you brought the money?” was all the response that in a harsh voice the Abbot deigned to give.

“Not one penny,” replied the knight.

“You are a shrewd debtor,” said the Abbot. “Sir Justice, drink to me. Well, sir, what, then, are you doing here if you have not come to pay your debts?”

“To pray you, for pity’s sake, to grant me longer time.”

“The day appointed has come,” said the Justice.

“You must lose your land.”

“Good Sir Justice be my friend, and protect me from my foe,” pleaded the knight.

“I hold with the Abbot both by my office and because he has hired my service as counsel,” said the Justice.

“Good Sir Sheriff, be my friend.”

“Nay, not for heaven,” said the Sheriff.

“Good, Sir Abbot, be my friend, and hold my lands in your keeping until I can pay all I owe you and redeem them,” entreated the knight. “And I will be your true servant, and serve you faithfully until you have full four hundred pounds of good money.”

The Abbot swore a round oath.

“Get the land where you can, for you’ll get none of me.”

“By my faith, if ever I have my land again it shall be bought full dearly,” exclaimed the knight. “God help us! It is good to test a friend before a man have need.”

The Abbot looked at him in wrath, and began to abuse him villainously.

“Out, thou false knight!” he said. “Speed thee out of my hall.”

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"Thou liest, Abbot, in thy hall!" said the knight, and he rose to his feet. "False knight was I never. Thou hast no courtesy to suffer a knight to kneel so long. I have been far afield in many a joust and tournament, and have ever put myself forward in press of battle as any I have seen."

But his words fell on cold unheeding ears. The Justice turned to the Abbot.

"What more will you give?—and the knight shall yield up his lands. If not," he went on, turning to the knight, "I swear you shall never hold them in peace."

"A hundred pounds," said the Abbot grudgingly.

The meanness of the offer was too much even for the Justice.

"Give him two hundred," he suggested.

"Nay, by heaven, you don't get my land yet like that," cried the knight. "And though you offered me a thousand more you would be no nearer. Neither Abbot, Justice, or friar shall ever be my heir." He strode up to the table, and shook on to it from a bag four hundred pounds. "Have here thy gold, Sir Abbot, which thou lent me. Hadst thou been courteous at my coming thou shouldst have been rewarded."

The Abbot sat still and ate no more, for all his royal cheer; he turned his head on his shoulder, and stared blankly at the knight. His dreams of avarice had been so suddenly swept away that for the moment he was stunned. But his mean and grasping nature speedily recovered itself. He had lost all hope of the knight's possessions, but it straightway occurred to him he might save a little pittance.



Walker

"Have here thy gold, Sir Abbot," said the knight,
"Which that thou lentest me ;
Hadst thou been courteous at my coming,
"Rewarded shouldst thou have be."

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“Give me back my gold again, Sir Justice, that I gave thee for thy fee,” he demanded.

But the Justice laughed in scorn. What he had he meant to keep.

“Nay, in good faith, not one penny.”

“Sir Abbot, and you men of law,” said the knight, “I have kept my day. Now I shall have my land again in spite of anything you can do.”

He strode out of the hall all his care gone ; he flung off his worn raiment, and put on his good clothing, and left the other lying where it fell. He went forth singing merrily, back to his own home at Wierysdale, and his lady met him at the gate.

“Welcome, my lord,” said his wife. “Sir, are all your possessions lost ?”

“Be merry, dame,” said the knight, “and pray for Robin Hood that his soul may always dwell in bliss. He helped me out of my distress ; had it not been for his kindness we should have been beggars. The Abbot and I are in accord ; he is served with his money ; the good yeoman lent it me as I came by the way.”

Then the knight dwelt in prosperity at home till he had four hundred pounds all ready to pay back Robin Hood. He provided himself with a hundred bows made with the best string, and a hundred sheaves of good arrows with brightly burnished heads. Every arrow was an ell long well dressed with peacock’s feathers, and they were all inlaid with silver so that it was a goodly sight to see. The knight provided himself with a hundred men, well armed. and clothed in white and red, and in the same

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fashion he attired himself. He bore a lance in his hand, and a man led the horse which carried his change of apparel. And thus he rode with a light heart to Barnsdale.

As he drew near a bridge he was forced to tarry awhile, for there was a great wrestling, and all the best yeomen of the West Country had flocked to it. A good game had been arranged, and valuable prizes were offered. A white bull had been put up, and a great courser, with saddle and bridle all burnished with gold, a pair of gloves, a red gold ring, a pipe of wine in prime condition. The man who bore himself the best would carry off the prize.

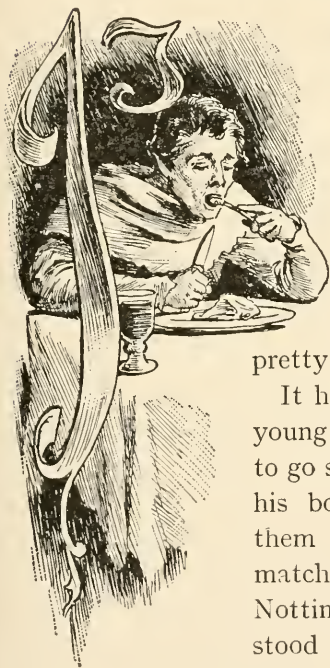
Now there was a certain worthy yeoman there who ought by rights to have been awarded the prize, but because he was a stranger the other wrestlers were jealous, and all set on him unfairly. As he was far from home and had no friends there, he would certainly have been slain if it had not been for the knight who, from the place where he stood, saw what was going on. He took pity on the yeoman, and swore no harm should be done to him, for the love he bore to Robin Hood. He pressed forward into the place, and his hundred archers followed him with bows bent and sharp arrows to attack the crowd. They shouldered everyone aside, and made room for the knight to make known what he had to say.

Then the knight took the yeoman by the hand, and declared he had fairly won the prizes. He bought the wine from him for five marks, and bade that it should be broached at once, and that everyone who wished should have a draught. Thus good humour and jollity were restored, and the rest of the sports went on merrily.

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The knight tarried till the games were done, and in the meanwhile it came to be three hours after noon. And all this time Robin had waited fasting for the coming of the knight to whom twelve months before he had lent the four hundred pounds

Little John and the Sheriff of Nottingham.



WILL be remembered that when the poor knight left Robin Hood in the forest Little John went with him to act as his yeoman. He stayed for some time in the knight's service, and a light and pleasant post he found it, for he was free to do pretty much as he liked.

It happened one fine day that the young men of Nottingham were eager to go shooting, so Little John fetched his bow, and said he would meet them in a trial of skill. While the match was going on, the Sheriff of Nottingham chanced to pass, and he stood for a while near the marks to watch the sport.

Three times Little John shot, and each time he cleft the wand.

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"By my faith, this man is the best archer that ever I saw," cried the Sheriff. "Tell me now, my fine lad, what is your name? In what county were you born, and where do you dwell?"

"I was born at Holderness," said Little John, "and when I am at home men call me Reynold Greenleaf."

"Tell me, Reynold Greenleaf, will you come and live with me? I will give you twenty marks a year as wages."

"I have a master already, a noble knight," answered Little John. "It would be better if you would get leave of him."

The Sheriff was so pleased with the prowess of Little John that he wanted to get him into his own service, so he went to the knight, and it was agreed the Sheriff should have him for twelve months. Little John was therefore given at once a strong horse, well equipped, and now behold him the Sheriff's man.

But Little John had not forgotten Robin Hood's words of warning about the Sheriff, and he was always thinking how he could pay him out for his hostility to the outlaws.

"By my loyalty and truth," said Little John to himself, "I will be the worst servant to him that ever he had."

Little John soon found that his new place was little to his liking. The other servants were not well pleased to see the new-comer; they were jealous of the favour shown to him at first by his master, and treated him with rudeness and contempt. The Sheriff himself was of a mean and grasping nature; he wished to secure Little John for his service, for he knew such a comely lad and fine archer would do him credit, but once he was sure of

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him he paid no heed to seeing that he was properly lodged and fed.

It happened one day the Sheriff went out hunting, and Little John was left at home forgotten. No meal was served to him, and he was left fasting till noon. As he was by this time very hungry he went to the steward, and asked civilly for something to eat.

“Good sir steward, I pray thee give me to dine,” he said. “It is too long for Greenleaf to be so long fasting, therefore I pray thee, steward, give me my dinner.”

“I’ve had no orders,” said the steward rudely. “Thou shalt have nothing to eat or to drink till my lord comes back to town.”

“Rather than that I’ll crack thy head,” said Little John.

The steward started forward to the buttery, and shut fast the door, but Little John gave him such a rap on his back it almost broke in two—as long as he lived he would be the worse for the blow. Then Little John put his foot to the door, and it burst open and Little John went in and helped himself plentifully to both ale and wine.

“Since you will not dine, I will give you to drink,” he said to the steward; “though you live for a hundred years you shall remember Little John.”

He ate and drank for as long as he chose, and the steward dared say nothing, for he was still smarting from the blow. But the Sheriff had in his employ a cook, a bold, sturdy man, and he was no coward either.

“A fine sort of fellow you are to dwell in a house and ask for dinner thus,” he cried, and he dealt Little John three good blows.

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"I vow I am very well pleased with those strokes of yours," said Little John, "and before I leave this place you shall be tested better."

He drew his good sword, and the cook seized another, and they went for each other then and there. Neither had any thought of giving in, but both meant to resist stoutly. There they fought sorely for a whole hour, and neither could in any way harm the other.

"On my soul," said Little John, "thou art one of the very best swordsmen that ever I saw. Couldst thou shoot as well with a bow thou shouldst go with me to the greenwood. Thou wouldst have from Robin Hood twenty marks a year as wages, and a change of clothing twice a year."

"Put up thy sword, and we will be comrades," said the cook.

He fetched at once for Little John a right good meal—dainty venison, good bread, and excellent wine—and they both ate and drank heartily. When they had well feasted they plighted their troth together that they would be with Robin that self-same night. Then they ran as fast as they could to the Sheriff's treasury, and though the locks were of good steel they broke them every one. They carried off all the silver plate—vessels, dishes, gold pieces, cups, and spoons, nothing was forgotten. They took also the money—three hundred and three pounds—and then they went off straight to Robin Hood in the forest.

"God save thee, my dear master," cried Little John.

"Welcome art thou, and also that fair yeoman whom

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thou bringest with thee," said Robin Hood. "What tidings from Nottingham, Little John?"

"The proud Sheriff greeteth thee well, and sendeth you here by me his cook and his silver vessels and three hundred and three pounds," said Little John.

"I dare take my oath it was never by his good will these goods come to me," laughed Robin.

Thus they all made merry in the greenwood, and said the Sheriff had been rightly paid for the greed and tyranny with which he performed the duties of his office, for by bribery and oppression he had got his ill-earned wealth.

Presently Little John bethought him of a shrewd device by which they could still further get the better of him. He ran into the forest here and there, and when he had gone about five miles it fell out as he wished; he came across the Sheriff himself hunting with hound and horn. Little John was mindful of his manners, and went and knelt on his knee before him, and saluted him courteously.

"Why, Reynold Greenleaf, where hast thou been now?" cried the Sheriff.

"I have been in the forest," said Little John, "and there I have seen a wondrous sight, one of the finest I ever yet saw. Yonder I saw a right gallant hart; his colour is green. Seven score of deer in a herd altogether are with him. His antlers are so sharp, master, I durst not shoot, for dread lest they should slay me."

"By heaven, I would fain see that sight," said the Sheriff.

"Turn thy steps thither, then, at once, dear master," said Little John. "Come with me; I will show you where he lies."

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The Sheriff rode off, and Little John ran beside him, for he was full smart of foot. Through the forest they went, and by-and-by they came to Robin Hood in the midst of his band of yeomen.

“Lo, there is the master hart,” said Little John.

The Sheriff stood still in dismay, and he was a sorry man.

“Woe worth thee, Reynold Greenleaf, thou hast betrayed me.”

“Ye are to blame, master, I swear,” said Little John. “When I was at home with you I was mis-served of my dinner.”

Then the outlaws made their guest sit down to supper with them, which he did with no good will, for he would fain have departed to his home at Nottingham. He was served on his own silver dishes, and when he saw his beautiful cups and vessels the Sheriff for sorrow could not eat.

“Cheer up, Sheriff,” urged Robin Hood. “For the sake of Little John thy life is granted thee. What, man, eat and be merry! Here is fine fat venison served in a goodly vessel.”

By the time they had well supped the day was done. Robin then bade his men strip the Sheriff of his fine clothes, his hose and his shoes, his kirtle, and the large handsome coat all trimmed with fur—and to give him in their place a green mantle to wrap himself in. He further bade his sturdy lads all to lie round the Sheriff in the same sort under the greenwood tree, so that he might see them, and know there was no chance of escape.

It was a sorry night the Sheriff passed, cold and shiver-

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ing, in his shirt and breeches, on the hard ground ; small wonder that his bones ached, and that he sighed piteously for his soft warm bed at home.

"Come, come, Sheriff, cheer up !" said Robin ; "for this is our order, you know, under the greenwood tree."

"This is a harder order than any anchorite or friar !" groaned the Sheriff. "For all the gold in merry England I would not dwell here long."

"Thou wilt dwell here with me for the next twelve months," said Robin. "I shall teach thee, proud Sheriff, to be an outlaw."

"Before I lie here another night, Robin, smite off my head rather, and I'll forgive it thee," said the Sheriff. "Let me go, for pity's sake !" he begged, "and I will be the best friend that ever thou hadst."

"Before I let thee go, thou shalt swear me here an oath," said the outlaw. "Swear on my sword that thou wilt never seek to do me harm by water or by land. And if thou find any of my men, by night or by day, thou shalt swear on thy oath to help them all thou canst."

There was no other way to get back his freedom, so the Sheriff was compelled to take the oath demanded by Robin. Then he was allowed to depart, and he went back to Nottingham a sad and sorry man, feeling that he had had more than enough of the greenwood to last him a very long time.

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How Robin Hood was Paid his Loan.



WELVE months had come and gone since Robin Hood lent four hundred pounds to the poor knight to redeem his land, and now the day had arrived when he had promised to pay back the money.

The Sheriff had returned to Nottingham, and Robin Hood and his merry men were left in the greenwood.

“Let us go to dinner,” said Little John.

“Nay, not yet,” said Robin. “Now I fear our friend the knight is likely to prove false, for he comes not to pay back the money, according to his word.”

“Have no doubt, master,” said Little John, “for the sun has not yet gone to rest.”

“Take thy bow,” said Robin, “and let Much and Will Scarlet go with you, and walk up into the Sayles, and to Watling Street, and wait there for some stranger guest, for you may well chance upon one there. Whether he be messenger or mountebank, rich man or poor man, he shall share dinner with me.”

Forth then started Little John, half-angry and half-troubled, and under his green mantle he girded on a good sword.

Robin Hood and His Merry Men

The three yeomen went up to the Sayles ; they looked east and they looked west, and not a man could they see. But as they looked towards Barnsdale, along by the highway, they were aware of two monks in black habits, each on a good palfrey.

“ I dare pledge my word that those two monks have brought our payment,” said Little John to Much, as soon as he saw them. “ Courage, and make ready our bows, and look your hearts be sure and strong, and your strings true and trusty. The monk hath fifty-two men, and seven sumpter-horses well laden ; there rideth no bishop in the land so royally. Comrades, we are here no more than three, but unless we bring them along with us to dinner, we dare not face our master. Bend your bows, make all yonder press stand ; the foremost monk, his life and death, I hold in my hand.”

Will Scarlet and Much did as they were bidden, and the whole throng of monks and retainers found themselves face to face with the three bold outlaws, who with bent bows barred their passage along the highroad.

“ Stay, church monk !” commanded Little John ; “ go not a step further ! If thou dost, by heaven, thy death is in my hand. Evil thrift on thy head ! Thou hast made our master wroth, he is fasting so long.”

“ Who is your master ?” asked the monk.

“ Robin Hood,” said Little John.

“ He is a great thief—I never heard any good of him,” said the monk.

“ Thou liest, and that thou shalt rue,” cried Little John. “ He is a yeoman of the forest, and he hath bidden thee to dinner.”

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But the monk had no mind to obey this stern invitation, and he made a movement to escape. Much, however, was ready with his bolt, and it caught the monk so neatly in the breast that it bore him to the ground. All his followers fled; of fifty-two sturdy young men not one remained behind, except a little page and groom, to lead the sumpter horses with Little John.

They brought the monk to the lodge-door, willing or unwilling, to speak with Robin Hood. When Robin saw the monk, he put back his hood and saluted him; but the monk was not so courteous, and let his hood be.

"He is a churl, master," said Little John.

"Well, use no violence on that account," said Robin; "for he knows no courtesy. How many men had this monk, John?"

"Fifty-two, when we met them, but most of them are gone."

"Sound a horn, so that our company may know," ordered Robin; and at the summons seven score of sturdy yeomen came pricking up. Every man wore a good mantle of scarlet, and they came to Robin to hear what he had to say.

They made the monk wash and dry himself, and sat him down to dinner, and Robin Hood and Little John both waited on him.

"Eat well, monk," said Robin.

"Thanks, sir," said he.

"Where is your abbey when you are at home?"

"St. Mary's Abbey," replied the monk, "though I am very humble there."

"In what office?"

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“ High cellarer, or steward.”

“ Ye be the more welcome !” said Robin. “ Fill of the best ! This monk shall drink to me.”

But all the time Robin kept thinking of the knight who had promised to return that day with the borrowed money.

“ I marvel much he does not come,” he said. “ I fear he does not mean to keep faith.”

“ Have no doubt, master,” said Little John. “ You have no need, I say. This monk hath brought the money, I dare swear, for he is of the same abbey of which the knight spoke.”

“ If thou hast brought the silver, I pray thee let me see it,” said Robin, “ and I will help thee in times to come if thou hast need of me.”

The monk swore with a good round oath and a most melancholy countenance that he knew nothing at all about the loan ; he had never heard of it before.

“ You must be the messenger sent to pay me,” persisted Robin. “ Therefore I thank thee for coming so faithfully on the very day. How much is in your coffers ? Tell me truly.”

“ Sir, twenty marks.”

“ If there be no more I will not take a penny,” said Robin, “ and should you have need of any more, sir, I will lend it you. And if you have more than the twenty marks you will forfeit it, for I would not claim any of the silver you require for your daily spending. Go now, Little John, and tell me the truth. If there be no more than twenty marks I will not take a penny of it.”

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Little John spread his mantle on the ground, as he had done before in the case of the knight, and he counted out of the monk's coffer over eight hundred pounds. He left it lying where it was, and ran to tell his master.

"Sir," he said, "the monk is true enough; he has brought back double the payment of the debt."

"What did I tell you, monk?" cried Robin in high glee. "By heaven, if I were to search all England through I could never lend a loan with safer security. Fill of the best; make him drink. If ever thy abbey hath need of more silver come thou again to me, and by this token it has sent it shall have it."

The monk was on his way to London to hold a great court or assembly in order to find some means of humiliating the knight who had treated the Abbot of St. Mary's in so high-handed a fashion. But when Robin went on to ask whither he was bound he answered that he was going to reckon with their receivers, who had been lately cheating them badly.

"Come here, Little John," said Robin, "I know no better yeoman to search a traveller's mail. How much is in yonder other coffer?"

"By our lady, it is no courtesy to bid a man to dinner, and afterwards to beat and bind him," cried the aggrieved monk.

"It is our custom from of old to leave but little behind," answered Robin.

The monk mounted his horse with speed, he would stay no longer.

"Will you not drink before you go?" asked Robin.

"Nay, in good sooth, I rue me I ever came so near.



“Greet well your abbot,” said Robin,
‘And your prior, you, I pray;
And bid him send me such a monk
To dinner every day.’”

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Far better and cheaper could I have dinner in Blyth or Doncaster."

"I pray you greet well your abbot, and bid him send me such a monk every day to dinner," Robin called after him as he rode off.

The knight, meanwhile, who had tarried to see the wrestling, came while it was still daylight to fulfil his promise. He went straight to Barnsdale, and there he found Robin Hood and his band under the greenwood tree. Directly the knight saw Robin he dismounted from his palfrey, and saluted him courteously on one knee.

"God save thee, good Robin Hood, and all this company."

"Welcome, welcome, noble knight," said Robin. "I pray thee tell me what need driveth thee to greenwood? I am right glad to see thee. Why hast thou been so long in coming?"

"The abbot and the High Justice have been trying to get hold of my land," said the knight.

"Hast thou thy land again?"

"Yea, and for that I thank God at thee. But take not offence that I have come so late in the day. On my journey hither I passed by some wrestling, and there I helped a poor yeoman who was being wrongly put behind by the others."

"Nay, by my faith, for that I thank thee," said Robin. "The man that helpeth a good yeoman, his friend will I be."

"Have here the four hundred pounds you lent me,"

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said the knight, "and here is also twenty marks for your courtesy."

"Nay, keep it and use it well yourself," said Robin, "for the high cellarer from St. Mary's Abbey hath given me my payment, and if I were to take it twice, it were shame for me. But truly, noble knight, I am most glad to see thee."

Robin told the story of the monk's capture, and they laughed long and loud over the tale.

"So, sir knight, thou wilt have to keep thy money," ended Robin, "and thou are right welcome under my trysting-tree. But what are all those bows for, and those finely feathered arrows?"

"They are a poor present to thee," said the knight.

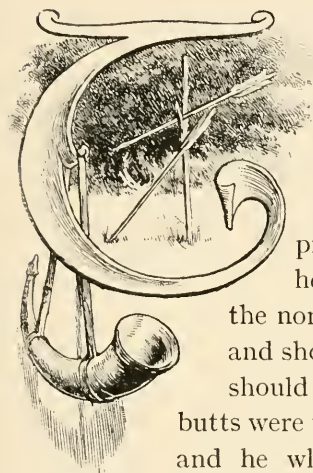
Then Robin Hood bade Little John go to his treasury and fetch the four hundred pounds the monk had paid over and above the sum due for the loan, and he insisted on the knight's accepting this money as a gift.

"Buy thyself a good horse and harness, and gild thy spurs anew," he said laughingly. "And if thou lack enough to spend come to Robin Hood, and by my truth thou shalt never lack while I have any goods of my own. So keep the four hundred pounds I lent thee, and I counsel thee never leave thyself so bare another time."

So good Robin Hood relieved the gentle knight of all his care, and they feasted and made merry under the green-wood tree.

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The Golden Arrow



HE knight took his leave and went on his way, and Robin Hood and his merry men lived on for many a day in Barnsdale.

Now the Sheriff of Nottingham proclaimed a grand sport to be held—that all the best archers of the north country should come one day and shoot at the butts, and that a prize should be given to the best archer. The butts were to be set in a glade in the forest, and he who shot the best of all should receive an arrow, the like of which had never been seen in England, for the shaft was to be of silver, and the head and feathers of red gold.

Now all this was a device of the Sheriff's to try to enthrall the outlaws, for he imagined in his mind that when such matches took place Robin Hood's men without any doubt would be the bowmen there.

Tidings of this came to Robin Hood in the forest, and he said: "Come, make ready, my lads, we will go and see that sport. Ye shall go with me, and I will test the Sheriff's faith, and see if he be true."

With that a brave young man, called David of Doncaster, stepped forward.

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"Master," he said, "be ruled by me, and do not stir from the greenwood. To tell the truth I am well informed yonder match is a wile. The Sheriff has devised it to entrap us."

"That sounds like a coward," said Robin; "thy words do not please me. Come what will of it, I'll try my skill at yonder brave archery."

Then up spoke brave Little John.

"Let us go thither, but come, listen to me, and I will tell you how we can manage it without being known. We will leave behind us our mantles of Lincoln green, and we will all dress differently so that they will never notice us. One shall wear white, another red, a third one yellow, another blue. Thus in disguise we will go to the sport, whatever may come of it."

When they had their bows in order and their arrows well feathered there gathered round Robin seven score of stalwart young men.

When they came to Nottingham they saw the butts set out fair and long, and many were the bold archers who came to shoot. The outlaws mixed with the rest to prevent all suspicion, for they thought it more discreet not to keep together.

"Only six of you shall shoot with me," said Robin to his men. "The rest must stand on guard with bows bent so that I be not betrayed."

The Sheriff looked all round, but amidst eight hundred men he could not see what he suspected.

The outlaws shot in turn, and they all did so well that the people said that if Robin Hood had been there, and all his men to boot, none of them could have surpassed these men.

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“Ay,” quoth the Sheriff ruefully, rubbing his head, “I thought he would have been here ; I certainly thought he would, but though he is bold he doesn’t dare to appear.”

His speech vexed Robin Hood to the heart. “Very soon,” he thought angrily, “thou shalt well see that Robin Hood *was* here.”

Some cried blue jacket, another cried brown, and a third cried brave yellow, but a fourth man said : “Yonder man in red hath no match in the place.”

Now that was Robin Hood himself, for he was clothed in red. Three times he shot, and each time he split the wand. To him, therefore, was delivered the golden arrow as being the most worthy.

He took the gift courteously, and would have departed back to the greenwood ; but the Sheriff of Nottingham had by this time marked him, and had no mind to let him go so easily. The alarm was raised ; they cried out on Robin Hood, and great horns were blown to summon help to capture him.

“Treachery ! treason !” cried Robin. “Full evil art thou to know ! And woe to thee, proud Sheriff, thus to entertain thy guest ! It was otherwise thou promised me yonder in the forest. But had I thee in the greenwood again, under my trysting-tree, thou shouldest leave me a better pledge than thy loyalty and truth.”

Then on all sides bows were bent, and arrows flew like hail ; kirtles were rent, and many a stout knave pricked in the side. The outlaws shot so strong that no one could drive them back, and the Sheriff’s men fled in haste.

Robin saw the ambush was broken, and would fain have been back in the greenwood, but many an arrow still

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rained on his company. Little John was hurt full sorely, with an arrow in his knee, and could neither ride nor walk.

“Master,” he cried, “if ever thou loved me, and for the meed of my service that I have served thee, let never that proud Sheriff find me alive! But take thy sword and smite off my head, and give me deep and deadly wounds, so that no life be left in me.”

“I would not that, John—I would not thou wert slain for all the gold in merry England!” cried Robin.

“God forbid that thou shouldst part our company, Little John,” said Much.

He took Little John up on his back, and carried him a good mile, and more. Often he laid him down on the ground, and turned to shoot those who came after, and then he took him up and carried him on again. So the outlaws fought their way, step by step, back to the forest.

A little within the wood there was a fair castle, with a double moat, and surrounded by stout walls. Here dwelt that noble knight, Sir Richard at the Lee, to whom Robin Hood had lent the four hundred pounds to redeem his land.

He saw the little company of outlaws fighting their way along, so he hastened to call them to come and take shelter in his castle.

“Welcome art thou, Robin Hood! Welcome!” he cried, as he led them in. “Much I thank thee for thy comfort and courtesy and great kindness to me in the forest. There is no man in the world I love so much as thee. For all the proud Sheriff of Nottingham, here



"Up he took him on his back,
And bare him well a mile;
Many a time he laid him down
And shot another while."

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thou shalt be safe ! Shut the gates, and draw the bridge, and let no man come in !” he shouted to his retainers. “ Arm you well ; make ready ; guard the walls ! One thing, Robin, I promise thee : here shalt thou stay for twelve days as my guest, to sup, and eat, and dine.”

Swiftly and readily tables were laid and cloths spread, and Robin Hood and his merry men sat down to a good meal.

How the Sheriff took Sir Richard Prisoner.



SHERIFF of Nottingham was wroth when he heard that Robin Hood and his band of outlaws had taken refuge in the knight's castle. All the country was up in rout, and they came and besieged the castle. From his post outside the walls the Sheriff loudly proclaimed the knight was a traitor, and was shielding the King's enemy against the laws and right.

“ I am ready to answer for the deeds I have done here by all the lands I possess, as I am a true knight,” was Sir Richard's answer. “ Go on your way, sirs, and leave me alone in peace until ye know our King's will, what he will say to you.”

The Sheriff, having had his answer, curt and to the point, rode forth at once to London to carry the tale to

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the King. He told him of the knight, and of Robin Hood, and of the band of bold archers which the latter kept up.

"The knight boasts of what he has done to maintain these outlaws," said the Sheriff. "He would be lord, and set you at nought through all the north country."

"I will be at Nottingham within the fortnight," said the King, "and I will seize Robin Hood, and also that knight. Go home, Sheriff, and do as I bid thee. Get ready enough good archers from all the country round about."

So the Sheriff took his leave, and went home to Nottingham to do as the King commanded.

Robin meanwhile had left the castle, and had gone back to the greenwood, and Little John, as soon as he was whole from the arrow-shot in his knee, went and joined him there. It caused great vexation to the Sheriff to know that Robin Hood once more walked free in the forest, and that he had failed of his prey; but all the more he was resolved to be revenged on Sir Richard Lee. Night and day he kept watch for that noble knight; at last, one morning when Sir Richard went out hawking by the riverside, the Sheriff's men-at-arms seized him, and he was led bound hand and foot to Nottingham.

When Sir Richard's wife heard that her husband had been taken prisoner, she lost no time in seeking help. Mounting a good palfrey, she rode off at once to the greenwood, and there she found Robin Hood and all his men.

"God save thee, Robin Hood, and all thy company! For the love of heaven, grant me a boon! Let not my wedded lord be shamefully slain. He is taken fast bound to Nottingham, all for the love of thee!"



“Let thou never, my wedded lord,
Shamefully slain to be ;
He is fast bound to Nottingham ware
For the love of thee.”

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“What man hath taken him?” asked Robin.

“The proud Sheriff,” said the lady. “He has not yet passed on his way three miles.”

Up then started Robin as if he were mad.

“Arm, lads! Arm and make ready! By heaven, he that fails me now shall never more be man of mine!”

Speedily good bows were bent, seven score and more, and away went the outlaws, full speed over hedge and ditch, in chase of the Sheriff’s men. When they came to Nottingham, there in the street they overtook the Sheriff.

“Stay, thou proud Sheriff—stay and speak with me!” said Robin. “I would fain hear from thee some tidings of our King. By heaven, these seven years have I never gone so fast on foot, and I swear it bodeath no good for thee.”

He bent his bow, and sent an arrow with all the might he could; it hit the Sheriff so that he fell to the ground, and lay there stunned, and before he could rise to his feet Robin drew his sword and smote off his head.

“Lie thou there, proud Sheriff, traitor and evil-doer!” said Robin. “No man might ever trust to thee whilst thou wert still alive!”

Now they fought hand to hand. Robin Hood’s men drew their sharp swords, that were so keen and bright, and laid on so heavily that they drove down the Sheriff’s men one after another.

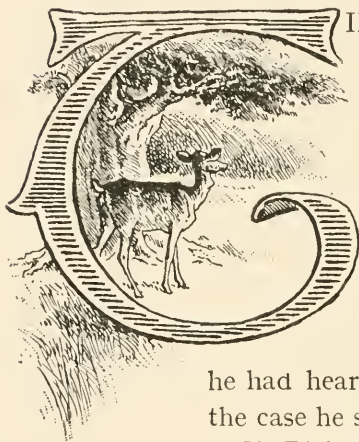
Robin Hood ran to Sir Richard Lee, and cut his bonds in two, and, thrusting a bow into his hand, bid him stand by him.

“Leave thy horse behind thee, and learn to run on

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foot," he counselled him. "Thou shalt go with me to the greenwood through mire and moss and fen. Thou shalt go with me to the forest, and dwell with me there, until I have got our pardon from Edward, our King."

How the King came to Sherwood Forest



EDINGS of the Sheriff's death were sent to King Edward in London, and he came to Nottingham with a great array of knights to lay hold of Sir Richard Lee and Robin Hood, if that were possible. He asked information from men of all the country round, and when he had heard their tale and understood the case he seized all the lands belonging to Sir Richard Lee. He went all through Lancashire, searching it far and wide, till he came to Plumpton Park, and everywhere he missed many of his deer. There he had always been wont to see herds in large numbers, but now he could scarcely find one deer that bore any good horn.

The King was furiously wroth at this.

"By heaven I would that I had Robin Hood here before me to see him with my own eyes," he exclaimed. "And he that shall smite off the knight's head and bring it here to me shall have all the lands belonging to

Robin Hood and His Merry Men

Sir Richard Lee. I will give them him with my charter, and seal it with my hand for him to have and to hold, for evermore."

Then up spoke a good old knight who was very faithful and loyal.

"Ay, my liege lord the King, but I will say one word to you," he said. "There is no man in this country who will have the knight's lands as long as Robin can go or ride and carry bow in hand. If anyone try to possess them he will assuredly lose his head. Give them to no man, my lord, to whom you wish any good."

The King dwelt for many months in Nottingham, but no man came to claim the knight's lands, nor could he ever hear of Robin Hood in what part of the country he might be. But always Robin went freely here and there, roving wherever he chose over hill and valley, and always slaying the King's deer, and disposing of it at his will.

Then a head forester who was in close attendance on the King spoke up, and said :

"If you would see good Robin you must do as I tell you. Take five of the best knights that are in your train, and go down to yonder abbey, and get you monks' habits. I will be your guide to show you the way, and before you get back to Nottingham I dare wager my head that you will meet with Robin if he be still alive. Before you come to Nottingham you shall see him with your own eyes."

The King hastened to follow the forester's counsel ; he and his five monks went to the abbey, and speedily disguised themselves in the garb of monks, and then blithely returned home through the greenwood. Their habits were grey ; the King was a head taller than all

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the rest, and he wore a broad hat, just as if he were an abbot, and behind him followed his baggage-horse, and well-laden sumpters, and in this fashion they rode back to the town.

They had gone about a mile through the forest under the linden trees when they met with Robin Hood standing in the path with many of his bold archers.

"Sir Abbot, by your leave, ye must bide awhile with us," said Robin, seizing the King's horse. "We are yeomen of this forest, we live by the King's deer, and we have no other means. But you have both churches and rents, and of gold full great plenty; give us some of your store for charity's sake."

"I brought no more than forty pounds with me to the greenwood," said the pretended abbot. "I have been staying at Nottingham for a fortnight with the King, and I have spent a great deal on many of the fine lords there. I have only forty pounds left, but if I had a hundred I would give it thee."

Robin took the forty pounds, and divided it into two parts; half he gave to his men, and bade them be merry with it, and the other half he returned to the King.

"Sir, have this for your spending," he said courteously. "We shall meet another day."

"Thanks," said the King. "But Edward our King greeteth you well; he sends thee here his seal, and bids thee come to Nottingham to dine and sup there."

He took out the broad seal, and let him see it, and at the sight of it Robin, knowing what was right and courteous, set him on his knee.

"I love no man in all the world so well as I do my

Robin Hood and His Merry Men

King," he said. "Welcome is my lord's seal, and welcome art thou, monk, because of thy tidings. Sir Abbot, for love of my King thou shalt dine with me to-day under my trysting-tree."

Forth he led the King with all gentle courtesy, and many a deer was slain and hastily dressed for the feast. Then Robin took a great horn and blew a loud blast and seven score of stalwart young men came ready in a row, and knelt on their knee before Robin in sign of salutation.

"Here is a brave sight," said the King to himself. "In good faith his men are more at his bidding than mine are at mine."

Dinner was speedily prepared, and they went to it at once, and both Robin and Little John served the King with all their might. Good viands were quickly set before him—fat venison, fish out of the river, good white bread, good red wine, and fine brown ale. The King swore he had never feasted better in his life.

Then Robin took a can of ale, and bade every man drink a health to the King. The King himself drank to the King, and so the toast went round, and two barrels of strong old ale were spent in pledging that health.

"Make good cheer, Abbot," said Robin, "and for these same tidings thou hast brought thou art doubly welcome. Now before thou go hence thou shalt see what life we lead here in the greenwood, so that thou mayest inform the King when ye meet together."

The meal was scarcely over when up started all the outlaws in haste, and bows were smartly bent. For a moment the King was sorely aghast, for he thought he

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would certainly be hurt. But no man intended ill to him. Two rods were set up, and to them all the yeomen flocked to try their skill at archery. The King said the marks were too far away by fifty paces, but he had never seen shooting such as this. On each side of the rods was a rose garland, and all the yeomen had to shoot within this circle. Whoever failed of the rose garland had as penalty to lose his shooting gear, and to hand it to his master, however fine it might be, and in addition to this he had to stand a good buffet on the head. All that came in Robin's way he smote them with right good will.

When his own turn came Robin shot twice, and each time cleft the wand, so also did the good yeoman Gilbert. Little John and Will Scarlet did not come off so well, and when they failed to hit within the garland they each got a good buffet from Robin. But at his last shot, in spite of the way in which his friends had fared, Robin, too, failed of the garland by three fingers or more.

"Master, your tackle is lost," said Gilbert. "Stand forth and take your pay."

"If it be so there is no help for it," said Robin. "Sir Abbot, I deliver thee mine arrow; I pray thee, sir, serve thou me."

"It falleth not within my order, by thy leave, Robin, to smite any good yeoman, for fear lest I grieve him," said the King.

"Smite on boldly; I give thee full leave," said Robin.

The King at these words at once folded back his sleeves, and gave Robin such a buffet that it nearly knocked him to the ground.

"By heaven, thou art a stalwart friar," cried Robin.



“‘Smite on boldly,’ said Robin,
‘I give thee large leave;’
Anon our King, with that word,
He folds up his sleeve.

Robin Hood and His Merry Men

“There is pith in thine arm ; I trow thou canst shoot well.”

Then King Edward and Robin Hood looked each other full in the face, and Robin Hood gazed wistfully at the King. So also did Sir Richard Lee, and then he knelt down before him on his knee. And all the wild outlaws, when they saw Sir Richard Lee and Robin Hood kneeling before the King, also knelt down.

“My lord the King of England, now I know you well,” said Robin. “Mercy, of thy goodness and thy grace, for my men and me ! Yes, before heaven, I crave mercy, my lord the King, for me and for my men.”

“Yes, I grant thee thy petition,” said the King, “if thou wilt leave the greenwood, thou and all thy company, and come home with me, sir, to my court, and dwell with me there.”

“I will swear a solemn vow that so it shall be,” said Robin. “I will come to your court to see your service and bring with me seven score and three of my men. But unless I like well your service, I shall soon come back to the forest, and shoot again at the dun deer, as I am wont to do.”

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The Wedding of Allen-a-Dale



“HAST thou any good cloth that thou wilt sell to me now?” said the King.

“Yes, three and thirty yards,” said Robin.

“Then I pray thee, Robin, sell me some of it for me and my company.”

“Yes, I will,” said Robin.

“I should be a fool if I did not, for I trow another day you will clothe me against Christmas.”

So the King speedily cast off his coat, and donned a garment of green, and so did all his knights. When they were all clad in Lincoln green and had thrown aside their monks’ grey habits, “Now we will go to Nottingham,” said the King.

They bent their bows, and away they went, shooting in the same band, as if they were all outlaws. The King and Robin Hood rode together, and they shot “pluck-buffet” as they went by the way—that is to say, whoever missed the mark at which he aimed was to receive a buffet from the other; many a buffet the King won from Robin Hood, and good Robin spared nothing of his pay.

“Faith,” said the King, “thy game is not easy to

Robin Hood and His Merry Men

learn ; I should not get a shot at thee though I tried all this year."

When they drew near Nottingham, all the people stood to behold them. They saw nothing but mantles of green covering all the field ; then every man began saying to another : " I dread our King is slain ; if Robin Hood comes to the town, he will never leave one of us alive." They all hastened to make their escape, both men and lads, yeomen and peasants ; the ploughman left the plough in the fields, the smith left his shop, and old wives who could scarcely walk hobbled along on their staves.

The King laughed loud and long to see the townsfolk scurry off in this fashion, and he commanded them to come back. He soon let them understand that he had been in the forest, and that from that day for evermore he had pardoned Robin Hood. When they found out the tall outlaw in the Lincoln green was really the King, they were overjoyed : they danced and sang, and made great feasting and revelry for gladness at his safe return.

Then King Edward called Sir Richard Lee, and there he gave him his lands again, and bade him be a good man. Sir Richard thanked the King, and paid homage to him as the true and loyal knight he had always been.

So Robin Hood went back to London with the King, and dwelt at court. But before many months had gone by he found all his money had melted away, and that he had nothing left. He had spent over a hundred pounds and now had not enough to pay the fees of his followers. For everywhere he went he had always been laying down money both for knights and squires, in order to win

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renown. When he could no longer afford to pay their fee, all the new retainers left him, and by the end of the year he had none but two still with him, and those were his own faithful old comrades, Little John and Will Scarlet.

It happened one day some young men of the court went out to shoot, and as Robin Hood stood with a sad heart to watch them, a sudden great longing for his old life in the greenwood came over him.

“Alas !” he sighed, “my wealth has gone ! Once on a time I too was a famous archer, sure of eye and strong of hand ; I was accounted the best archer in merry England. Oh, to be back once more in the heart of the greenwood, where the merry does are skipping, and the wind blows through the leaves of the linden, and little birds sit singing on every bough ! If I stay longer with the King, I shall die of sorrow !”

So Robin Hood went and begged a boon of the King.

“My lord the King of England, grant me what I ask ! I built a little chapel in Barnsdale, which is full seemly to see, and I would fain be there once again. For seven nights past I have neither slept nor closed my eyes, nor for all these seven days have I eaten or drunk. I have a sore longing after Barnsdale ; I cannot stay away. Bare-foot and doing penance will I go thither.”

“If it be so, there is nothing better to be done,” said the King. “Seven nights—no longer—I give thee leave to dwell away from me.”

Thanking the King, Robin Hood saluted him and took his leave full courteously, and away he went to the greenwood.

Robin Hood and His Merry Men

It was a fair morning when he came to the forest. The sun shone, the soft green turf was sewn with flowers that twinkled like stars, and all the air rang with the song of birds. The cloud of care and sorrow rolled away from Robin's spirit, and his heart danced as light as a leaf on the tree.

"It is long since I was here last," he said, as he looked around him. "I think I should like to shoot once more at the deer."

He fitted an arrow to his bow, and away it sped to its mark, and down dropped a fine fat hart. Then Robin blew his horn. And as the blast rang out, shrill and sweet and piercing, all the outlaws of the forest knew that Robin Hood had come again. Through the woodland they gathered together, and fast they came trooping, till in a little space of time seven score stalwart lads stood ready in order before Robin. They took off their caps, and fell on their knee in salutation.

"Welcome, our master! Welcome, welcome back to the greenwood!" they shouted.

For many years after that, Robin Hood dwelt in the forest, and for all his dread of King Edward he would never go back to court.

One day when he was in the greenwood he saw a comely young man go by. He was as fine as fine could be, clothed in gay scarlet, and he bounded along, singing merrily to himself. The next day Robin saw him again, but this time there was a great change. The young man crept along with drooping head: he had cast aside his gay scarlet doublet, and was clad in a sombre suit; and at

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every step, instead of humming a merry song, he sighed. "Alack, and well-a-day!"

Little John and Much, the miller's son, stepped forward, whereupon the young man bent his bow.

"Stand off, stand off! What is your will with me?" he said, when he saw them coming.

"You must come before our master at once, under yonder greenwood tree," said Little John.

"Hast thou any money to spare for my merry men and me?" asked Robin Hood courteously, when the stranger stood before him.

"I have no money but five shillings and a ring," answered the young man, "and those I have kept these seven long years to have at my wedding. Yesterday I was to have married a maiden, but she has been taken away from me, because a rich old knight has chosen to take a fancy to her. My heart is broken."

"What is thy name?" then said Robin.

"I am called Allen-a-Dale."

"What wilt thou give me in ready gold, or promise me in fee, to help thee again to thy true love if I deliver her back to thee?" asked Robin.

"I have no money," quoth the young man; "no ready gold to give, nor anything I can promise as fee; but I will swear a faithful oath ever to be thy true servant."

"How many miles is it to thy true love?" asked Robin.

"By my faith, it is but five little miles," cried Allen eagerly.

So Robin went off at full speed through glade and glen, and over holt and hill; he never stopped nor slackened pace till he came to the church where Allen's wedding



“Robin slew a full great hart,
His horn then gan he blow,
That all the outlaws of that forest
That horn could they know.”

Robin Hood and His Merry Men

was to have been. There he found the Bishop waiting, the church full of people, and everything in readiness for another marriage.

“Whom have we here?” said the Bishop. “I prithee tell me what manner of man art thou?”

“I am a bold harper, the best in all the north country,” quoth Robin Hood.

“You are right welcome,” said the Bishop. “I like that music best of all.”

“You shall have no music till I see the bride and bridegroom,” said Robin.

With that in came an aged-looking knight, who though wealthy was both grave and harsh looking, and after him a dainty, slender young lass, fresh as the morning, and shining like gold.

“This is not a fit match that you seem to be making here,” said Robin. “Since we have come to the church the bride shall choose her own bridegroom.”

Robin Hood put his horn to his mouth, and blew two or three good blasts. Then over the meadow came leaping four-and-twenty yeomen. And when they came into the churchyard, marching all in a row, the first man was Allen-a-Dale to hand his bow to Robin.

“This is thy true love, young Allen, as I hear,” said Robin, “and you shall be married now, at this very moment, before we depart.”

“That shall not be,” protested the Bishop; “it cannot be done as you say. They shall be asked three times in church according to the law of the land.”

Robin Hood took off the Bishop’s coat, and put it on Little John.

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"Now ask them in church," he said, and all the people laughed.

Little John then stood forth in front of them, and in case three times should not be enough he published the banns of marriage seven times.

"Who gives this maid to be married?" said Little John.

"That do I," said Robin Hood. "And he that takes her from Allen-a-Dale shall buy her full dearly."

Thus the wedding was held, and the bride looked like a queen, and when it was over they all went back to the greenwood and made merry.

Robin Hood and the Beggar



ROBIN HOOD went out alone one day, and as he came out from Barnsdale, towards the evening, he met a lusty beggar trudging sturdily along. The wayfarer had in his hand a huge pikestaff, and he was well sheltered from the cold by a great patched cloak, the thinnest part of which must have been many folds thick. His meal "poke" or sack hung round his neck in a stout leathern strap, fastened with a broad strong buckle. Three hats were jammed on his head, stuck fast one within the other, and he cared neither for wind nor wet in the countries he passed through.

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Robin Hood placed himself in his way to see what manner of man he might be. If the beggar had any money he thought he might just as well have a share of it.

"Tarry, tarry to speak with me," said Robin, but the beggar made as though he heard not, and went on quickly.

"Nay," said Robin, "that must not be ; thou *shalt* tarry."

"By my troth, I will not," said the beggar. "It is far to my lodging-house, and it is growing late. If they have supped before I get there I shall look wondrous silly."

"Now in good truth I plainly see by your air that so long as you get a good share of your own supper you care nothing about mine—a poor fellow who has lacked dinner all day, and knows not where to lodge, and if he went to a tavern has no money to buy! Sir, you must lend me some money till we meet again."

"I have no money to lend," said the beggar angrily. "Thou art as young a man as I am, and, I think, as lazy. If thou fast till thou get anything from me, thou shalt eat nothing for the next year."

"Now, by my truth, since we have thus happened to meet, if you have only a little farthing I'll have it before you go," cried Robin. "Come, lay down your old patched cloak, and loosen the strings of your wallets; I'll search them all with my own hands. And I swear to thee now if you make any noise I shall see if a broad arrow can pierce a beggar's skin."

The beggar smiled in disdain.

"Far better let me be," he made answer. "Think

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not I am afraid of thy piece of crooked wood, or that I fear thee in the least for thy little bits of stick ; I know no use so meet for them as to skewer up pudding-bags. I defy thee to do me any harm in spite of thy blustering air. You'll get nothing but ill from me, however long you try."

Robin bent his bow in rage, and set in it a broad arrow, but before he had drawn the string two inches the beggar lifted up his staff, and dealt him such a blow that bow and arrow flew in splinters. Robin then seized his sword, but that, too, proved useless, for the beggar's club lighted on his hand with such force that it was a month and more before Robin could again draw sword.

Robin Hood stood still ; his heart was sore. He could not say a word, he could not fight, he could not run away ; he knew not what to do. And all the while the sturdy beggar kept raining blows on him hard and heavy, till Robin at last fell senseless to the ground.

"Stand up, man," jeered the beggar. "'Tis a shame to go to rest. Stay till you have had your money counted out to you, then afterwards you can go to the tavern, and buy ale and wine, and your friends will be able to boast vauntingly what you have done in the dale."

Robin answered never a word ; he lay as still as stone, his cheeks pale as clay, and his eyes fast shut. The beggar thought he must be dead without fail, and boldly went on his way.

Now it happened by chance that three of Robin's men came walking that way, and they found their master where he lay on the ground in a swoon. They lifted him



“‘Stand up, man,’ the beggar said,
‘Tis shame to go to rest ;
Stay till thou get thy money told,
I think it were the best.’”

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up with much piteous lamentation, but saw no one near of whom they could ask concerning the matter. They carefully searched Robin all over for the marks of any wounds, but could find none, except that he was bleeding at the mouth. They quickly got cold water, and dashed it in his face, and in a very short time Robin was able to stir a little and speak.

“Tell us, dear master, how you are, and what is the matter?” begged the men.

Robin sighed deeply before he began to tell the story of his disgrace.

“I have been watchman in this wood nigh on twenty years,” he said, “yet I was never so hard bested as you have found me to-day. A beggar in an old patched cloak, of whom I feared no ill, hath so clawed my back with his pike-staff that I fear it will never be well. See where he goes over yonder hill! If ever you loved your master, go now and revenge this deed, and bring that beggar back again to me, if it lies in your power, so that I may see him punished in my sight before I die. And if you cannot bring him back, do not let him go loose upon his way, for it would be great shame to us if he escape again.”

“One of us shall stay with you here, because you are ill at ease,” said the outlaws; “the other two shall fetch the beggar back to deal with at your will.”

“Now, by my troth, if he get room to wield his staff, I fear ye will both pay for it,” said Robin.

“Be not afraid, master, that we two can be beaten by any old wretch of a beggar that has nothing but a stick,” declared one of the outlaws. “His staff shall not stand him in any stead, as you shall very soon see; we will bring

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him, and fast bound too, for you to say if you would rather have him slain or hanged on a tree."

"Well, creep near him slyly before he is aware, and lay hands first on his pike-staff, so you will speed the better," Robin counselled them.

In the meanwhile the bold beggar trudged sturdily on his way, and no more quickened his pace than if he had done no ill. The outlaws knew the country well, and guessed where he would soon be, and they took another road which was shorter by three miles. They ran with all their might, sparing not for stone or mire, starting at neither hollow nor hill, and quite tireless, till they got ahead of the beggar, and placed themselves in the road he must go. — A little wood lay in a glen, and here they hid themselves, standing up closely by a tree on each side of the gate, until the beggar, never dreaming of such an encounter, came near. As he passed between them, they both leaped out on him; the one gripped fast his pike-staff, and the other held a drawn dagger at his breast.

"False carle, let go thy staff, or thou art a dead man!"

They took his pike-staff from him, and stuck it into the ground. He was full loth to let it go, but there was no help for it. The beggar was in sore dread; he knew no way to escape or to get back his staff. Nor did he know why he had been taken, nor how many foes were there; he thought his last hour had come, and began to despair.

"Grant me my life, and hold off that ugly knife, or I shall die of fear!" he groaned. "I never did you any harm, early or late; it will be very sinful of you if you slay a poor silly beggar."

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“Thou liest, false knave ! Thou hast nearly slain the noblest man ever yet born. And thou shalt be bound fast, and led back again, to see if he would rather have thee slain or hanged on a tree.”

The beggar now thought there was no hope for him ; they were quite resolved on his ruin. He saw nothing but one ill on the top of another. If he were only out of their hands and had his staff again, he thought, he would not be led back for anything by such as he saw now. Then he bethought him of a wile, if he could only carry it out, how he could beguile the young men and play them a trick. He found the wind was blowing strong, which would further his intent.

“Brave gentlemen, be good, and let a poor man be !” he pleaded. “When ye have taken a beggar’s blood, it will not help you a jot. It was but in my own defence if the man has got any hurt ; but I will make a recompense better for both of you. If you will set me free and do me no further harm, I will give you a hundred pounds and a lot of odd silver that I have been gathering for many years under this patched cloak, and which is hidden away wonderfully private at the bottom of my meal-poke.”

The young men yielded to the counsel, and let the beggar go ; they knew well he was not swift enough to escape from them. They resolved to have the money, whatever befell afterwards, and decided not to take the beggar back to Robin Hood, but to slay him where he was ; in this case Robin would not know they had got any money, and would be quite content if he heard the beggar was slain.

“Have done, false carle, and count out thy money,”

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they said. "It is but a poor return for all the ill thou hast done. But we will consent not to take thee back bound, whatever befalls afterwards, if thou wilt do as thou sayest, and make us present payment."

The beggar loosened his patched cloth, and, spreading it on the ground, laid on it many "pokes," or bags, between the young men and the wind. He took from round his neck a great bag nearly full of meal—two pecks, at least, or more. He set this down on the cloak, and opened the mouth wide, watching cunningly to turn it out when he spied the young men were off their guard. In each hand he took a corner of the great leathern sack, and with a fling he shot the meal full in their faces. This so blinded them that they could not see a glimmer of light, and the beggar with a joyful heart clapped hold again of his trusty stick. If he had done them wrong by covering their clothes with meal, he reflected, he would at least beat it all off again with his pike-staff. . Before they could clear the meal out of their eyes, they had each received a dozen good blows, stoutly laid on. But the young men were nimble of foot, and bounded out of reach ; so the beggar could no longer hit them, however hard he might try.

"What's all this haste?" cried the beggar. "Can ye not tarry a little while to receive your money? I will pay it you with much good will. I fear the shaking of my bags has blown into your eyes, but I have a good pike-staff here that will clean them out right well."

The young men answered never a word ; they were dumb as a stone, and before they had got the meal out of their eyes the beggar had fled into the thick wood. By

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that time the night was so late it was in vain to seek him, but you may judge if they looked silly when they got home !

Robin asked how they had fared, and they answered, " Very badly ! "

" That cannot be," said Robin ; " you have been at the mill—there is always plenty of food to be got there—and you seem to have been helping yourselves largely, to judge from your clothes."

The young men hung their heads and looked very shamefaced, but did not answer a word.

" Because I fell in a swoon, I think you mean to do the same," said Robin. " Come, come, tell me about the matter, little or much ! What have you done with that bold beggar I sent you after just now ? How did you deal with him ? "

Then the outlaws told him all that had happened—how the beggar had thrown the meal in their faces and blinded them ; how he had battered their broad shoulders with his trusty staff ; how he had fled away into the thick wood before they could see a glimmering of light ; and how they had scarcely been able to crawl home, their bones had been so sorely basted.

When they had come to an end, " Fie ! out on you for shame ! We are disgraced for evermore !" cried Robin. But, though he would have gladly been revenged on the beggar for the wrong he had done himself, he could not help laughing to see that his merry young men had also got a taste from the trusty pike-staff.

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Robin Hood and the Butcher



HAPPENED one day when Robin Hood was in the forest that he saw a jolly butcher with a fine mare, who was going to market to sell his meat.

“Good morrow, good fellow, what food have you there?” said Robin. “Tell me what is your trade, and

where you live, for I like the look of you.”

“No matter where I live,” answered the man. “I am a butcher, and I am going to Nottingham to sell my flesh.”

“What’s the price of your flesh?” said Robin. “And tell me, too, the price of your mare, however dear she may be, for I would fain be a butcher.”

“Oh, I’ll soon tell you the price of my flesh,” replied the butcher. “For that, with my bonny mare, and they are not at all dear, you must give me four marks.”

Robin Hood agreed at once to the bargain.

“I will give you four marks. Here is the money; come, count it, and hand me over the goods at once, for I want to be a butcher.”

So the man took the money, and Robin took the mare and the cart of meat, and went on to Nottingham to



“‘What’s the price of thy flesh?’ said jolly Robin,
‘Come, tell it unto me;
And the price of thy mare, be she ever so dear,
For a butcher I fain would be,’”

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begin his new trade. He had a plan in his mind, and in order to carry it out he went to the Sheriff's house, which was an inn, and took up his lodging there.

When the butchers opened their shops Robin boldly opened his, but he did not in the least know how to sell, for he had never done anything of the kind before. In spite of this, however, or rather because of it, while all the other butchers could sell no meat Robin had plenty of customers, and money came in quickly. The reason of this was that Robin gave more meat for one penny than others could do for three. Robin therefore sold off his meat very fast, but none of the butchers near could thrive.

This made them notice the stranger who was taking away all their custom, and they began to wonder who he was, and where he came from. "This must be surely some prodigal, who has sold his father's land, and is squandering away his money," they said to each other. They went up to Robin to get acquainted with him. "Come, brother, we are all of one trade," said one of them; "will you go dine with us?"

"By all means," answered Robin, "I will go with you as fast as I can, my brave comrades." So off they hastened to the Sheriff's house, where dinner was served at once, and Robin was chosen to sit at the head of the table and say grace.

"Come, fill us more wine; let us be merry while we are here," he cried. "I'll pay the reckoning for the wine and good cheer however dear it may be. Come, brothers, be merry. I'll pay the score, I vow, before I go if it costs me five pounds or more."

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"This is a mad blade," said the butchers, but they laughed and made haste to eat and drink well at Robin's expense.

Now the Sheriff, who was of a very shrewd and grasping nature, had not failed to remark this handsome young butcher lad who was so very lavish of his money, and who sold his meat in the market so much cheaper than anyone else. If there were good bargains to be made he determined to make his own profit out of them. "He is some prodigal," he said to himself, "who has sold land, and now means to spend all the money he has got for it." If Robin were able to sell his meat so cheap it occurred to the Sheriff that probably he possessed a great deal of cattle, and would most likely be ready to part with them for a very low price. "Hark'ee, good fellow, have you any horned beasts you can sell me?" he asked in a lordly way.

"Yes, that I have, good master Sheriff, two or three hundred," answered Robin. "And I have a hundred acres of good free land, if it would please you to see it. I'll hand it over to you as securely as ever my father did to me."

The Sheriff, quite pleased to think of the fine bargain he was likely to make, saddled his palfrey, and taking three hundred pounds in gold in his portmanteau, went off with Robin Hood to see his horned beasts. Away they rode till they came to the forest of Sherwood, and then the Sheriff began to look about him in some alarm.

"God preserve us this day from a man they call Robin Hood," he said earnestly.

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When they had gone a little further Robin Hood chanced to spy a hundred head of good fat deer, who came tripping quite close.

“How like you my horned beasts, good Master Sheriff? They are fat and fair to see, are they not?”

“I tell you, good fellow, I would I were gone, for I like not your company,” said the Sheriff, now very ill at ease.

Robin set his horn to his mouth, and blew three blasts, and immediately Little John and all his company came flocking up.

“What is your will, master?” asked Little John.

“I have brought hither the Sheriff of Nottingham to dine with thee to-day.”

“He is welcome,” said Little John; “I hope he will pay honestly. I know he has gold enough, if it is properly reckoned, to serve us with wine for a whole day.”

Robin took off his mantle and laid it on the ground and from the Sheriff’s portmanteau he counted out three hundred pounds in gold. Then he led him through the forest, set him on his dapple-grey palfrey, and sent him back to his own home.

About this time there was living in Nottingham a jolly tanner whose name was Arthur-a-Bland. Never a squire in Nottingham could beat Arthur, or bid him stand if he chose to go on. With a long pike-staff on his shoulder he could clear his way so well he made everyone fly before him.

One summer’s morning Arthur-a-Bland went forth into Sherwood Forest to see the deer and there he met Robin

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Hood. As soon as Robin saw him he thought he would have some sport, so he called to him to stand.

"Why, who art thou, fellow, who rangest here so boldly?" he said. "In sooth, to be brief, thou lookst like a thief who comes to steal the King's venison. I am a keeper in the forest; the King puts me in trust to look after the deer. Therefore I must bid thee stand."

"If you be a keeper in this forest, and have so great authority," answered the tanner, "yet you must have plenty of helpers in store before you can make me stop."

"I have no helpers in store, nor do I need any. But I have good weapons, which I know will do the deed."

"I don't care a straw for your sword or your bow, nor all your arrows to boot," said Arthur-a-Bland. "If thou getest a knock on thy bare pate, thou mayst just as well spit as shoot."

"Speak civilly, good fellow, and give me better terms," said Robin, "else I'll correct thee for thy rudeness, and make thee more mannerly."

"Marry! see how you'll look with a knock on your bare scalp!" quoth the tanner. "Are you such a goodly man? I care not a rush for your looking so big. Look out for yourself, if you can."

Then Robin Hood unbuckled his belt, and laid down his bow, and took up a staff of oak, very stiff and strong.

"I yield to your weapons, since you will not yield to mine," said Robin. "I, too, have a staff, not half a foot longer than yours. But let me measure before we begin, for I would not have mine to be longer than yours, for that would be counted foul play."

"The length of your staff is nothing to me," said the

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tanner. "Mine is of good stout oak ; it is eight feet and a half long, and it will knock down a calf—and I hope it will knock down you."

At these mocking words, Robin could not longer forbear, but gave the tanner such a crack on the head that the blood poured down. Arthur quickly recovered, and gave Robin in return such a knock on the crown that in a few minutes blood ran trickling freely down the side of his face.

As soon as he saw his own blood, Robin raged like a wild boar, while Arthur-a-Bland laid on so fast it was as if he were cleaving wood. Round about and about they went, like wild boars at bay, striving to maim each other in leg or arm or any place. Knock for knock they dealt lustily, so that the wood rang at every blow, and this they kept up for two hours or more.

But at last Robin was forced to own that he had met his match, and he called to the sturdy stranger to stay.

"Hold thy hand, hold thy hand, and let our quarrel drop !" he cried. "For we may thrash our bones all to smash here, and get no good out of it. Hold thy hand, and hereafter thou shalt be free in the merry forest of Sherwood."

"Thank you for nothing !" retorted Arthur. "I have bought my own freedom. I may thank my good staff for this, and not you."

"What tradesman are you, good fellow, and where do you dwell ?"

"I am a tanner, and in Nottingham I have worked for many years. If you will come there, I vow and protest I will tan your hide for nothing."

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“God have mercy, good fellow, since you are so kind and obliging,” said Robin. “If you will tan my hide for nothing, I’ll do as much for you. But come, if you will forsake your tanner’s trade, to live here with me in the greenwood, my name is Robin Hood, and I swear faithfully to give you good gold and wages.”

“If you are Robin Hood, as I think very well you are, then here’s my hand,” said the tanner. “My name is Arthur-a-Bland. We two will never part. But tell me, where is Little John? I would fain hear of him, for we are allied, through our mother’s family, and he is my dear kinsman.”

Then Robin blew a loud, shrill blast on his bugle, and instantly Little John came quickly tripping over the hill.

“Oh, what is the matter? Master, I pray you tell me!” cried Little John. “Why do you stand there with your staff in your hand? I fear all is not well.”

“Yes, man, I do stand here, and this tanner beside me has made me stand,” said Robin. “He is a fine fellow, and master of his trade, for he has soundly tanned my hide.”

“He is to be commended if he can do such a feat,” said Little John. “If he is so sturdy, we will have a bout together, and he shall tan my hide too.”

“Held your hand,” said Robin; “for, as I understand, he is a good yeoman of your own blood; his name is Arthur-a-Bland.”

Then Little John flung away his staff as far as he could, and, running up to Arthur-a-Bland, threw his arms around his neck. Both were ready and eager to be friends, and made no attempt to conceal their delight at the meeting,

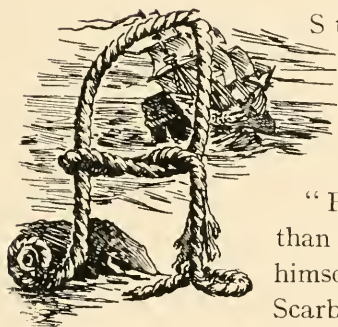
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but wept for joy. Then Robin Hood took a hand of each, and they danced all round the oak-tree, singing :

“For three merry men, and three merry men,
And three merry men we be !

“And ever hereafter, as long as we live,
We three will be as one ;
The wood it shall ring, and the old wife sing,
Of Robin Hood, Arthur, and John.”

The Noble Fisherman



As the summer days grew hot and long, Robin Hood began to be weary of the forest and chasing the deer, and a new fancy came into his head.

“Fishermen have more money than many merchants,” he said to himself ; “therefore I will go to Scarborough, that I may be a fisherman.”

When he got to Scarborough he found a house belonging to a widow woman quite close to the sea, and there he asked if he could have a lodging. The widow asked him many questions—where he was born, and what he meant to do, and so on. Robin replied that he was a poor fisherman, just then very badly off.

“What is your name, my fine fellow ?”

“In my own country, where I was born, men call me Simon over the Lee.”

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The dame eyed him up and down, and saw he was a strong, likely lad. Robin was quite aware he had won her favour, and was glad to be in such luck.

“Well, Simon, will you be my man?” said the woman. “I’ll give you good round wages. I have as a good a ship of my own as any that sails on the sea. It is well fitted up with anchors and planks, and masts and ropes, and everything you can want—nothing is lacking.”

“If you furnish me like that,” said Simon, “it will be all right.”

So Robin Hood settled with the woman that he should be her man and go in her fishing-boat, and the anchor was soon hauled up, and away they sailed. They had not been more than a day or two at sea, however, when it was clearly to be seen that Robin knew nothing of a fisherman’s work; he never managed to catch any fish, and by-and-by the other men noticed that while they cast in baited hooks, he cast nothing but bare lines into the sea.

“That great lubber will never thrive at sea,” said the master of the ship angrily. “He shall have no share of our fish, for he isn’t worth any.”

Then Robin Hood began to be very sorry he had ever thought of becoming a fisherman.

“Woe is me that ever I came!” he sighed. “I wish I were back in Plumpton Park, chasing the fallow deer! For every clown here laughs me to scorn and sets me at nought. If I had them in Plumpton Park, I would set as little store by them.”

Soon, however, matters mended for Robin. They had only been out at sea two or three days when they espied a French ship of war sailing straight at them. It was now

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the master's turn to say, "Woe is me !" and wish he had never been born.

"All the fish we have taken is lost and gone," he mourned, "for yonder French robbers will not spare a man of us ; they will carry us to the coast of France, and throw us into prison."

"Fear them not, master ; do not be ill at ease," said Robin. "Give me a bent bow in my hand, and never a Frenchman will I spare."

"Hold thy peace, thou long lubber ; thou art nought but brags and boast," said the master. "If I were to throw you overboard, it would only be a great lubber lost."

Robin was very wroth at these words. He went and fetched his bow.

"Master, tie me to the mast, that I may stand steadily at my mark," he said ; "and give me my bow in hand, and not a Frenchman will I spare."

He drew his arrow to its head with might and main, and straight, in the twinkling of an eye, it flew to a Frenchman's heart. Down dropped the Frenchman, and another sailor who espied him threw the dead body into the sea.

"Master, loose me from the mast," said Robin, "and be not afraid for any of them."

Arrow after arrow sped to its mark, till the French ship of war was at their mercy. When they boarded her they found she carried twelve thousand pounds of money.

"Half of the prize money I will give to the widow dame and her young children," said Robin ; "the other half I will give to you, my good comrades."

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“No, Simon, that shall not be,” said the master of the ship, “for you have won it all with your own hands, and you shall be the owner of it.”

“Well,” said Robin, “I will use the gold to build a habitation for the poor and the oppressed, so that they may dwell in rest and peace.”

Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne



WHEN the trees are in full leaf, and the woodland glades are gay with flowers, then it is merry to walk in the fair forest, and to hear the song of the birds.

The missel-thrush sang, and would not cease; he sang so loud as he sat on the spray that he wakened Robin Hood where he lay asleep in the greenwood.

“Now, in good faith,” said Robin, “I had a strange dream this night. I dreamt of two sturdy yeomen who fought fiercely with me. It seemed to me they beat and bound me, and took away my bow. As sure as I am Robin Hood, I’ll be revenged on those two yeomen.”

“Dreams! What are they?” quoth Little John “Dreams pass as swiftly as the wind that blows over the hill. For, however loud it might be to-night, to-morrow it may be quiet.”

But Robin Hood paid no heed to what he said.

Robin Hood and His Merry Men

“Dress, make you ready, my merry men!” he called to his companions. “And John shall go with me, for I am going to seek those sturdy yeomen in the forest, where I am sure they are.”

So they all put on their green mantles, and took their bows, and away they went into the woods to shoot, but Little John alone went with Robin Hood. And there in the forest they found the very person whom Robin sought, a sturdy yeoman leaning up against a tree. He wore in his belt a sword and dagger, which had proved fatal to many a man, and he was clad in a horse’s hide, complete with tail and mane.

Then Little John was afraid for his master, lest evil should befall him, because of the strange dream he had had that night, and he begged Robin to let him go first to speak to the ill-looking stranger.

“Stand you still, master, under this thick tree,” he said, “and I will go to yonder lusty fellow to discover his intent.”

But Robin Hood was very angry at such a suggestion, and refused with scorn.

‘Ah, John, you set no store by me, and I marvel at it! How often do I send my men before, and tarry behind myself? It needs no wisdom to know a knave or a man without hearing him speak. If it were not for bursting of my bow, John, I would break your head!’

Angry words often breed mischief, and so it was in this case with Robin Hood and John. They parted in wrath, for Robin Hood stayed where he was, and Little John went on to Barnsdale.

But when he got to Barnsdale Little John had a great

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grief, for he found two of his own fellows slain in a valley between woods, while Will Scarlet was flying on foot, fast over stick and stone, with the Sheriff and seven score men after him.

"Now will I shoot one arrow," said John. "I'll stop yonder fellow that flies so fast."

He bent his long bow, and made ready to shoot, but the bow was made of tender wood, and as he drew the string it split in two, and fell at his feet.

"Woe worth thee, false wood, that ever thou grew on tree, for now thou art my bale, when thou shouldst have been my aid!" cried John.

The shot was but loosely sped, yet the arrow flew not in vain, for it met one of the Sheriff's men, William-a-Trent, and slew him. But Little John was only one among many, and the Sheriff's men seized him and bound him fast.

"Thou shalt be dragged over dale and down, and hanged high on a hill!" said the Sheriff.

But Little John laughed and refused to lose heart.

"Thou may'st yet fail of thy purpose, if it be heaven's will," he said with calm assurance.

In the meanwhile Robin Hood had gone up to the strange yeoman whom he had seen the night before in his dream.

"Good-morrow, good fellow!" said Robin.

"Good-morrow, good fellow!" returned the other. "Methinks by the bow you bear in your hand you should be a good archer. I have wandered out of my way, and am losing my chance."

Robin Hood and His Merry Men

“I’ll lead thee through the wood, good fellow. I will be thy guide,” said Robin.

“I seek an outlaw ; men call him Robin Hood,” said the stranger. “I would rather than forty pounds that I met with that bold outlaw.”

“Come with me, and thou shalt soon see Robin Hood,” said Robin. “But first let us find some pastime under the greenwood tree. Let us have some trial of skill here in the forest ; we may chance to meet with Robin Hood at a time not appointed.”

They cut down two large stakes that grew under a briar, and they set them up three score rods off, so that they might shoot together at the marks.

“Lead on, good fellow,” quoth Robin.

“Nay, by my faith, but thou shalt be my leader,” said the other.

The first time Robin shot he missed the mark by only an inch. The stranger was a good archer, but he could never shoot like that. He had the second shot, and he shot within the garland—that is, the ring within which the mark was set. But Robin shot far better than he, for he clave the good wand.

“Bless thee, good fellow, thy shooting is good !” cried the other. “If thy heart were as good as thy hand, thou wert better than Robin Hood ! Now tell me thy name.”

“Nay, in faith, not until you have told me yours,” said Robin.

“I dwell by dale and down, and I am sworn to take Robin Hood,” said the yeoman. “When I am called by my right name, I am Guy of Gisborne.”

“My dwelling is in this forest,” said Robin. “I set

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you utterly at nought. I am Robin Hood of Barnsdale, whom you have sought so long."

Had one been neither kith nor kin it would have been a fair sight then to see how those two yeomen flew at each other with flashing swords. They fought together for two hours of that summer's day, but neither would give in. At last, with a careless step, Robin tripped over the root of a tree, and Guy, who was quick and nimble, hit him in the left side.

"It was never man's destiny to die before his day," quoth Robin, and he leaped again to his feet, and with a backward stroke smote off Guy's head.

"Thou hast been a traitor all thy life, which thing must have an end," said Robin. "Lie there now, Sir Guy, and be not wroth with me. If thou have had the worse strokes at my hand, thou shalt have the better clothes." And with that he threw his own green mantle over Sir Guy, and he put on himself the outlaw's garment of horse's hide which Sir Guy had thrown off when they began to fight.

"Now I will take his bow and arrows and little horn, for I must away to Barnsdale to see how my men fare," said Robin.

He set Guy's horn to his mouth and blew a loud blast, and the Sheriff of Nottingham, who was coming that way with Little John as his prisoner, heard the sound and knew it.

"Hearken, hearken! I hear good tidings!" he cried. "For yonder I hear Sir Guy's horn blow. He hath slain Robin Hood! He blows right lustily. And yonder comes the brave yeoman himself, clad in his horse's hide!



"Lye there, lye there, now. Sir Guye,
And with me be not wrothe;
If thou hast had the worse strokes at my hand,
Thou shalt have the better clothe."

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Come hither, thou good Sir Guy ; ask what thou wilt of me."

"Oh, I will have none of thy gold," answered Robin. "I want none of thy wages. But now I have slain the master, let me go smite the man. That is all the reward I ask ; I will have no other."

"Thou art a madman," said the Sheriff. "Thou shouldst have had a knight's fee. But seeing thy asking has been so small it shall be granted."

When Little John heard his master speak he knew at once it was his voice. "Now I shall be loosed !" he said to himself.

On the pretence of smiting the prisoner, Robin Hood hurried up to Little John, meaning to loose him instantly, but the Sheriff and all his men followed close after him.

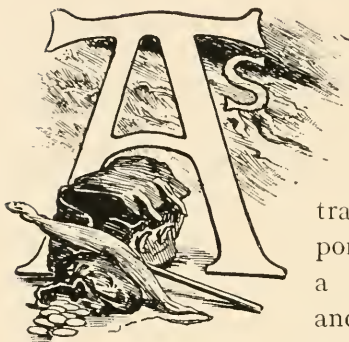
"Stand back ! stand back ! Why do you come so near ?" said Robin. "It was never the custom in our country that another should hear one's confession."

The Sheriff and his men fell back a few paces, and let Robin advance alone to where Little John stood, bound hand and foot. Then Robin whipped out his knife and quickly cut his bonds, and he thrust into Little John's hand Sir Guy's bow, and bade him make use of it. Little John seized the bow and arrows, but when the Sheriff saw him bend the bow he made off with all the speed he could. He fled fast away towards his house in Nottingham, and so did all his company ; not one stayed behind.

But the Sheriff could neither run nor ride so fast but that Little John could aim an arrow at him, and as he galloped away an arrow flew after him and lodged in his back.

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Robin Hood and the Bishop



ROBIN HOOD was in Barnsdale one day he heard that the Bishop of Hereford was to pass through with all his train. Now this Bishop loved pomp and show, but he was of a mean and grasping nature, and cared nothing at all about the poor folk whom he should

have helped and befriended.

Robin Hood, who was always on the side of the poor and the oppressed, had no mercy on those who lived in selfish ease by the money they wrung out of others.

"I never yet hurt any man who is true and honest," he said, "but only those who give their minds to live on other men's due. I never hurt the husbandman who tills the ground, nor spill the blood of those who range the woods with hound or hawk. My chief spite is to the rich clergy who bear sway in these days, and I make my chief prey of friars and monks, with their fine pranks and pompous, lazy ways of living."

So when Robin Hood heard that the Bishop of Hereford was to pass that way through the forest, he resolved to give him a lesson.

"Come, kill me a good fat deer," he said to his men.

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“The Bishop of Hereford is to dine with me here to-day, and he shall pay well for his meal. We’ll kill a fat deer, and dress it by the side of the highway, and we will watch narrowly for the Bishop lest he ride another way.”

Then Robin dressed himself and six of his men in the guise of shepherds, and when the Bishop came by, they all appeared to be very busy round about the fire.

“What is the matter?” asked the Bishop. “And for whom do you make all this ado? And how dare you kill the King’s deer?”

“We are shepherds,” answered Robin, “and we keep sheep all the year. To-day we are disposed to be merry, and to kill the King’s venison.”

“You are fine fellows!” said the Bishop. “The King shall know of your doing. Haste, therefore, and come along with me, for you shall go before the King.”

“Pardon, oh pardon, I pray thee!” entreated Robin, in seeming alarm. “It does not become one of your lordship’s calling to take away so many lives.”

“No pardon!” said the Bishop. “I owe thee no pardon! Therefore make haste, for thou shalt go before the King.”

He signed to his men to seize Robin, but the outlaw put his back against a tree, and from underneath his shepherd’s coat he pulled out a bugle. He put the little end to his mouth, and blew a loud blast, and three score and ten gallant outlaws came flocking at the call. Down they bent on their knee before him to make obeisance. It was a comely sight.

“What is the matter, master, that you blow so hastily?” asked Little John.

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"Here is the Bishop of Hereford, and we shall have no pardon," said Robin in a solemn voice.

"Cut off his head, master, and throw him into his grave," said Little John.

"Pardon, oh pardon!" cried the Bishop. "I pray thee pardon, for if I had known it had been you, I would have gone some other way."

"No pardon!" said Robin Hood. "I owe thee no pardon. Therefore, make haste and come along with me, for thou shalt go to merry Barnsdale."

He took the Bishop's hand, and led him away into the greenwood, and there he made him stay and sup with him that night, and drink wine and beer and ale.

The Bishop was in great dismay at the thought he would have to pay for all this feasting.

"Call in the reckoning, for methinks it grows wondrous high," he said.

"Lend me your purse, master, and I will tell you at once what it comes to," said Little John.

He took the Bishop's cloak, and spread it on the grass, and from the Bishop's portmanteau he counted out three hundred pounds.

"Here's money enough, master, and 'tis a comely sight," said Little John. "It makes me in charity with the Bishop, though in good sooth he loveth not me."

Then Robin took the Bishop by the hand, and ordered music to play, and there under the greenwood tree he made him dance with him. The Bishop, who was in terror of the outlaws, was glad to get off so easily, but in his heart he was full of wrath, and if ever the chance

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came his way he resolved to be well revenged on Robin Hood.

Some time after this, when Robin was walking alone one day in the forest, on the look-out for some pastime, he saw the Bishop again come riding along with all his company.

“Oh, what shall I do if the Bishop take me?” said Robin to himself. “He will show me no mercy, I know. I had better flee.”

So Robin bestirred himself nimbly, and looked about to see where he could escape, and there in the wood he spied a little house. Running up to it, he found an old wife sitting at the door spinning, and to her he at once called out, begging her to save his life.

“Why, who art thou?” said the old woman. “Come, tell me, for thine own good.”

“I am an outlaw, as many know; my name is Robin Hood. And yonder is the Bishop and all his men. If I am taken, he will never rest night or day till he revenge his spite, and I shall certainly be hanged.”

“If thou be Robin Hood, as thou seemst to be,” said the old woman, “I’ll provide for thee, and hide thee from the Bishop and his company. For I remember how one Saturday night thou brought me both shoes and hose; therefore I will undertake to conceal thee and shelter thee from thine enemies.”

“Then give me quickly thy grey coat, and take my green mantle,” said Robin. “And let me have your spindle of twine, and you take my arrows.”

The exchange was made in the twinkling of an eye, and

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when Robin Hood was arrayed in the disguise of an old woman, with a spindle of twine, he went straight back to his own band of outlaws, often looking behind him as he went for the Bishop and his followers.

“Who is that yonder coming over the lee?” quoth Little John. “I will let fly an arrow at her; she looks like an old witch.”

“Hold thy hand! hold thy hand! Shoot not!” called out Robin. “I am Robin Hood, your master, as you will see very soon.”

The Bishop meanwhile had come up to the old woman’s cottage, for he had caught sight of Robin in the forest when he was making his escape, and followed in the direction he went. He guessed he had taken refuge in the cottage, and began calling out in a fury:

“Come, let me see that traitor, Robin Hood! Bring him to me!”

The old woman, who had completely covered herself with Robin Hood’s mantle, pretended to try to hide, but she took care to let the arrows in her hand be seen. They dragged her out of the cottage, and set her on a milk-white steed, while the Bishop rode beside her on his dapple grey palfrey, chuckling for joy because he had taken the bold outlaw.

But as they were riding along through the forest the Bishop chanced to see a hundred stout bowmen standing under the trees.

“Oh, who is that yonder, ranging among the woods?” he asked of his captive.

“Marry, I think it be a man they call Robin Hood,” answered the old woman.

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“Why, who then art thou that I have here with me?” demanded the Bishop.

“Why, I am an old woman, you silly old man,” huddled the dame.

“Then woe is me, that ever I saw this day!” cried the Bishop in sore alarm, and he turned round to flee. But Robin Hood called to him to stop, and the Bishop dared not disobey.

Then Robin took hold of his horse and tied him to a tree, while Little John smiled with glee at his master to see the rich prize they had taken. Robin spread his mantle on the grass, and out of the Bishop’s coffer he soon counted five hundred pounds in gold.

“Now let him go,” said Robin.

“Nay, that must not be,” said Little John, “for I vow and protest he shall sing to us before he goes.”

The Bishop, in great wrath, would have refused, but Robin took him by the hand and bound him to a tree, and bade him do as he was commanded. So, willing or unwilling, the Bishop had to sing to the outlaws, and when he had done this, they led him back through the forest, set him on his dapple grey palfrey, and sent him away.

Not long after this, Robin Hood was going to Nottingham one day, when he happened to meet on the road a poor widow woman, who was weeping bitterly.

“What news, what news, thou poor old soul?” said Robin. “Why art thou weeping?”

“There are three squires in Nottingham town—my sons—who are condemned to die this day,” she sobbed.

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“Have they burnt parishes, or slain ministers, or robbed any maiden, or stolen any man’s wife?” asked Robin.

“They have not burned parishes, good sir, nor slain any minister, nor robbed any maiden, nor stolen any man’s wife.”

“Well, what have they done?”

“It is for slaying the King’s fallow-deer, bearing their long bows with thee,” said the widow woman.

“Now in good sooth you could not have told it in better time,” said Robin.

He hurried on to Nottingham, and on the way he met a poor old palmer walking along the road.

“What news, what news, my good old man?” asked Robin Hood.

“Three squires in Nottingham town are condemned to die this day,” said the palmer.

“Come, change thy apparel with mine, old man,” said Robin. “Here are forty shillings in good silver; go and spend it how you will.”

The old man stared in amazement.

“Why, thy apparel is good, and mine is all ragged and rent. Do not laugh a poor old man to scorn.”

“Come, come, old churl, change thy apparel with mine,” repeated Robin impatiently. “Here are twenty broad pieces of gold. Go and feast your companions.”

The old palmer with trembling fingers began to take off his tattered clothing, and Robin hastily arrayed himself in it. He put on the queer old hat, very high in the crown, and he put on the old man’s cloak, which was patched black and blue and red. Round his neck he



Then Robin Hood took him by the hand
And bound him fast to a tree,
And made him sing, before he went,
To him and his yeomandree."

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hung all the little bags in which the palmer was wont to store all the scraps and pieces bestowed on him as he begged by the way. Then Robin put on the breeches, which were patched from side to side, and the hose, which were patched from ankle to knee.

"In good sooth," said Robin, "I could laugh if I felt in the least inclined."

Then he put on the old man's shoes, which were patched both above and below, and when he was thus clad in all the palmer's garb no one would have guessed that this was the bold outlaw.

"By my faith," said Robin, "it's the good habit that makes a man."

Now Robin Hood reached Nottingham, and there he met the Sheriff walking along the street. He saluted him humbly, in keeping with his disguise, and asked him what he would give a poor old man who would act that day as hangman.

"I'll give thee some suits of clothes," said the Sheriff, "and thirteen pence, which is nowadays a hangman's fee."

At this Robin was so pleased he gave a caper of delight. The Sheriff eyed him in curiosity.

"On my soul, that's well jumped, my nimble old man," he said.

"I was never a hangman in all my life, and I do not intend to take up that trade," said Robin. "Cursed be he who was ever first made a hangman!—I've a bag here for meal," he went on, "and a bag for malt, and a bag for corn and barley, and a bag for bread, and a bag for beef, and a bag for my little horn. I have a horn in my

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pocket, I got it from Robin Hood. Whenever I set it to my mouth it blows little good for thee."

"Oh, wind your horn, you impudent fellow, I've no fear of thee," said the Sheriff. "I wish you would give such a blast that your eyes would fall out."

The first blast Robin Hood blew he blew very shrill and loud, and a hundred and fifty of his men came riding over the hill. The next blast that he gave he blew very strong and clear, and sixty of his men came flashing over the plain.

"Who are those that come tripping over the lee?" asked the startled Sheriff.

"Those are my attendants," said Robin; "they will pay thee a visit."

Then the outlaws took down the gallows from the market-place, where it was waiting ready for the widow's three sons, and set it up in the glen, and hanged the proud Sheriff on it. After this they set free the good yeomen, and all went happily back to the greenwood.

Robin Hood and His Merry Men

How Robin Hood went to Nottingham



N E WHITSUNTIDE, early on a morning in May, the sun shone brightly, and the little birds sang on every bough. Little John was gay and light of heart, but Robin Hood seemed sad and pensive.

“By my faith, this is a merry morning,” quoth Little John. “A gladder man than I am you will not find in Christendom. Pluck up heart,

dear master; remember it is full fair weather, and a morning in May.”

“Yes, but one thing grieves my heart,” said Robin, “that at this solemn season I cannot go to church. It is a fortnight and more since I was there last. To-day I will go to Nottingham.”

“Take twelve of your stout yeomen, with good weapons at their side,” counselled Much, the miller’s son. “Some one might slay you if you were by yourself, who would never dare attack twelve men.”

“By my faith, I will have none of all my men,” declared

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Robin. "But Little John shall go with me, and carry my bow till I wish to draw it."

"You shall carry your own bow, master, and I will carry mine," said Little John. "And as we go we will shoot for a penny the mark."

"I will not shoot with you, in faith, Little John, for a penny the mark," said Robin Hood. "But for every one you shoot I will wager three."

Thus it was agreed, and off they started, shooting as they went at all sorts of things by the way—bushes, and sticks, and trees—till Little John had won of his master five shillings. But a strange disagreement fell between them, for Little John said he had won five shillings, and Robin Hood said curtly he had not; nay, more, in his anger he said Little John lied, and smote him with his hand.

At this Little John was very wroth, and pulled out his sword.

'If thou wert not my master thou should'st pay full dearly for that!' he cried. "Get thee a man where thou wilt, Robin, thou getst me no more."

So Robin Hood went on mournfully alone to Nottingham, and Little John went back to Sherwood Forest.

When Robin Hood came to Nottingham he entered the town without any attempt at concealment, but he prayed to God to bring him safe out again. He went into St. Mary's Church, and knelt down before the altar, and all those who were in the church saw him quite well. Near beside him stood a great hooded monk, and as soon as he saw Robin Hood he knew him at once, for he was the very monk whom the outlaws had once seized in the



“Beside him stood a great hooded monk,
I pray to God woe he be;
Full soon he knew good Robin Hood,
As soon as he him see.”

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forest. Out of the church he ran instantly, and had all the gates of Nottingham fast shut and barred.

“ Rise up, rise up, Sheriff !” he cried. “ Prepare, make ready ! I have spied the King felon, in good sooth ; he is in this town. I have spied the false felon as he stands at his prayers. It will be your fault now if he gets away from us. This traitor’s name is Robin Hood. He robbed me once of a hundred pounds ; I shall never forget it.”

Up rose the Sheriff, and away he went to the church, and a great crowd of people with him. In at the doors they pushed pell-mell, all of them armed with good stout staves.

“ Alas, alas, now I miss Little John,” said Robin Hood to himself.

But he drew a two-handed sword that hung at his side, and where the Sheriff and his men stood the thickest he rushed at the press. Thrice he cut his way through the crowd, and many were those he wounded, and several he slew. But at last, on the head of the Sheriff, his sword broke in two.

“ The smith that made thee, I pray heaven work him woe !” cried Robin. “ For now am I weaponless, and if I flee from these traitors they will certainly kill me.”

Away in the greenwood word came to the yeomen that Robin Hood, their master, was taken. Then were they like madmen, not knowing what to do, for some ran with might and main to St. Mary’s Church, and some fell swooning by the way as if they were dead. Alone among them all Little John kept his wits about him.

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“Let be your grief, for heaven’s sake! Ye that should be doughty men, it is shameful to see you despair thus,” he rebuked them. “Our master has been hard bested before, and yet has escaped. Pluck up heart, and leave this moaning, and hearken to what I say. Robin has served heaven many a day, and will yet do so again in safety; no wicked death shall he die. Courage, then, and give over this mourning.

“To-morrow the monk is to carry a letter to the King in London telling him that Robin is taken, and asking what is to be done with him. I will be that monk’s guide,” said Little John. “Much and I will go to meet him—just we two together. Look that ye keep well the trysting tree, and spare none of the venison that goes in this vale.”

So these two yeomen, Little John and Much, started forth together, and went to the house of Much’s uncle, which stood quite close to the highway. From here they could see all who passed up or down. The next morning as Little John kept watch at the window he saw in the distance the monk come riding along, and with him a little page.

“Good tidings,” said Little John to Much. “I see where the monk comes riding along; I know him by his wide hood.”

The yeomen went out into the highway, as if they were civil, well-meaning gentlemen, and in a friendly fashion asked news of the monk.

“From whence do you come?” said Little John. “I pray you, give us tidings of a false outlaw called Robin Hood, who was taken yesterday. He robbed me and

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my comrade here of twenty marks. If that false outlaw be taken we shall in sooth be glad."

"So did he rob me of a hundred pounds," said the monk. "I was the first to lay hands on him, therefore ye may thank me he was taken."

"I pray heaven thank you," returned Little John, "and we will do so when we are able. We will go with you, by your leave, and bring you on your way, for Robin Hood has many wild companions, I assure you. If they knew you were riding this way, in good faith, you would be slain."

Then as the monk and Little John went along, talking by the way, Little John suddenly seized the bridle of the monk's horse, and dragged the monk off.

"He was my master whom you have plunged into evil fortune," said Little John. "You shall never come at the King to tell him the story." And he slew the monk on the spot, and he and Much buried him by the wayside where he fell. Then taking the letters, he and Much rode on together to carry them to the King.

When they came to the court, Little John fell on one knee before the King, as was meet and seemly.

"God save you, my liege lord," said Little John. and he boldly handed him the letter which told of Robin Hood's capture.

The King unfolded it, and read it at once.

"Good news!" he cried. "Never yeoman in England have I longed so sorely to see.—But where is the monk thou shouldst have brought?" he added, looking round.

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“By my troth, he died on the way,” answered Little John.

The King gave Little John and Much twenty pounds with his own hand, and made them yeomen of the crown, and bade them return to Nottingham. He gave his seal to John to carry to the Sheriff, with the command that Robin Hood was to be sent to him, and that no man was to do him any injury.

Little John took leave of the King, and the next day went back to Nottingham. When he got to the town all the gates were fast shut and barred. He called up the porter, who soon came at his summons.

“What is the reason you bar these gates so fast?” asked Little John.

“Because of Robin Hood, who is thrown into prison,” answered the porter. “His yeomen come and slay our men on the walls, and assault us every day.” But he let in Little John at once, for he knew he was a messenger from the King.

Little John asked for the Sheriff, whom he soon found, and opening the King’s privy seal he gave it into his hand. Directly the Sheriff saw the King’s seal he uncovered his head in token of respect.

“Where is the monk who bore the letters?” he asked of Little John.

“The King was so pleased to see him he has made him Abbot of Westminster,” answered Little John.

The Sheriff made Little John very welcome, and gave him good cheer, and the best of wine, and when night came, every man went to bed. When the Sheriff was fast asleep, having drunk too much ale and wine, Little

Robin Hood and His Merry Men

John and Much took their way to the prison. Calling up the gaoler, Little John bade him rise quickly, for that Robin Hood had broken loose. The man came running quickly, but Little John had his sword ready for him, and killed him before he could give an alarm.

“Now I will be porter and take care of the keys,” he said, and went at once to Robin Hood, and quickly unbound him. He gave him a good sword to guard himself with, and there where the wall was lowest they leaped down, and so escaped from Nottingham and back into the greenwood.

By that time the cock began to crow and the day to dawn. The Sheriff came early to visit the prison, but he found the gaoler dead and the captive flown. The alarm bell was rung, and proclamation made all through the town that whoever should catch Robin Hood would be well rewarded.

“If he is lost I shall never dare to come before the King,” said the Sheriff, “for if I do, I know he will certainly hang me.”

Every street and by-lane in Nottingham was searched through and through, but all was in vain. Robin Hood was back in Sherwood Forest, and his heart was light as the leaf of a linden tree.

But Little John was still sore in spirit at the way Robin had treated him, and when they were safely back under the greenwood tree he went up and spoke to him.

“I have done you a good turn for an evil one,” he said. “Requite me when you choose. I have done you a good turn, as I say, I have brought you safely back to the greenwood. Now farewell, and good-day to you.”

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“Nay, by my troth, it shall never be so,” cried Robin. “I will make thee master of all my men and me.”

“Nay, by my troth it shall never be so,” echoed Little John in his turn, all feeling of resentment melting on the spot. “Let me be your comrade as hitherto ; I will be nothing else.”

Thus Little John got Robin Hood out of prison, and glad indeed were all his merry men when they saw their master once more whole and sound. They filled him wine, and set before him pasties of right good venison, and there under the spreading branches of the trees they rejoiced and made merry.

When word came to the King in London how Robin Hood was gone, and how the Sheriff of Nottingham would never dare to appear before him, then indeed was the King wroth.

“Little John has beguiled the Sheriff, by heaven, and so he has me !” he exclaimed. “He has beguiled us both, that I see full well. If it were not for this, the Sheriff of Nottingham should be hanged.—I made him yeoman of the crown, I gave him fee with my own hands,” the King went on. “I gave him grace through the whole of England. I pardoned him, in good sooth, for such a yeoman as he is there are not three in the land ! He is true to his master—by St. John, he loves Robin Hood better than he does any one of us ! Robin Hood is beholden to him for as long as he shall live. Speak no more of the matter, but John has beguiled us all,” said the King.

Robin Hood and His Merry Men

How Robin Hood drew his Bow for the Last Time



UT there came a day at last when Robin Hood had to bid farewell to the greenwood where he and his merry men had spent so many happy years. Word was sent to the King that the outlaws waxed more and more insolent to his nobles and all those in authority, and that unless their pride was quelled the land would be overrun.

A council of state was therefore called, to consider what was best to be done. Having consulted a whole summer's day, at length it was agreed that someone should be sent to seize Robin Hood and bring him before the King.

A trusty and most worthy knight, called Sir William, was chosen for this task.

"Go you hence to that insolent outlaw, Robin Hood," said the King, "and bid him surrender himself without more ado, or he and all his crew shall suffer. Take a

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hundred valiant bowmen, all chosen men of might, skilled in their art, and clad in glittering armour.”

“ My sovereign liege, it shall be done,” said the knight. “ I’ll venture my blood against Robin Hood, and bring him alive or dead.”

A hundred men were straightway chosen, as proper men as were ever seen, and on midsummer day they marched forth to conquer the bold outlaw.

With long yew-bows and shining spears they marched in pomp and pride, and they never halted nor delayed till they came to the forest.

“ Tarry here, and make ready your bows,” said the knight to his archers, “ that in case of need you may follow me. And look you observe my call. I will go first, in person, with the letters of our good King, duly signed and sealed, and if Robin Hood will surrender we need not draw a string.”

The knight wandered about the forest, till at length he came to the tent of Robin Hood. He greeted the outlaw, and showed him the King’s letter, whereupon Robin sprang to his feet and stood on guard.

“ They would have me surrender, then, and lie at their mercy ?” quoth Robin. “ Tell them from me that shall never be while I have seven score of good men.”

Sir William, who was a bold and hardy knight, made an attempt to seize Robin then and there, but Robin was too quick to be caught, and bade him forbear such tricks. Then he set his horn to his mouth, and blew a blast or two ; the knight did the same. Instantly from all sides archers came running, some for Robin Hood some for the knight.

Robin Hood and His Merry Men

Sir William drew up his men with care, and placed them in battle array. Robin Hood was no whit behind with his yeomen. The fray was stern and bloody. The archers on both sides bent their bows, and arrows flew in clouds. In the very first flight the gallant knight, Sir William, was slain ; but nevertheless the fight went on with furious vigour, and lasted from morning until almost noon. They fought till both parties were spent, and only ceased when neither side had strength to go on. Those of the King's archers that still remained went back to London with right good will, and Robin Hood and his men retreated to the depths of the greenwood.

But Robin Hood's last fight was fought, and of all the arrows that ever he shot, there was but one yet to come. As he left the field of battle he was taken ill, and he felt his strength fail, and the fever rise in his veins.

"We have shot for many a wager," he said to Little John, as they went over a bank of broom, "but I am not able to shoot one shot more ; my arrows will not flee. But I have a cousin living down yonder, the Prioress of Kirkley Hall ; she is well skilled in medicine. Please God she will bleed me, and cure me of this fever that is sapping away my life."

So Robin Hood went to Kirkley Hall, as fast as he could hie, but before he got there he was very ill indeed. When he came to the nunnery he knocked and rang, and none was so ready as his cousin herself to let him in.

"Will you please to sit down, Cousin Robin, and drink some beer with me ?" she said in her most gracious manner.

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"No, I will neither eat nor drink till you have blooded me," said Robin.

"Well, I have a room which you have never yet seen, Cousin Robin," she said. "If you will please to walk therein, I will do what you ask."

She took him by the hand, and led him up to the little chamber, and there she blooded him in the arm. But she was a wicked and treacherous woman. Whether it was out of private spite to her kinsman because of the way he had treated rich monks and friars, or whether some enemy of Robin's had persuaded her to betray him if ever she had the chance, is not known. But certain it is that, instead of tending the sick man carefully after bleeding him, she went away without binding up the wound, and left him alone, locked up in the room.

There he bled all day, and till the next day at noon, and then he bethought him of a little casement door opening on the outer wall of the nunnery. But his life was ebbing fast away, and now he was too weak to leap down.

Then he remembered his little bugle-horn, which still hung at his side, and setting it to his mouth, he blew once, twice, and again—a low, weak blast.

Away in the greenwood, as he sat under a tree, Little John heard the well-known call, but so faint and feeble was the sound it struck like ice to his heart.

"I fear my master is near dead, he blows so wearily!"

Never after hart or hind ran Little John as he ran that day to answer his master's dying call. He raced like the wind to Kirkley Nunnery, and he burst open lock after lock till he came to the room where Robin was, and fell on his knee before him.



“But give me my bent bow in my hand,
And a broad arrow I'll let flee;
And where this arrow is taken up,
There shall my grave digged be.”

Robin Hood and His Merry Men

“A boon, master! A boon, I beg of thee!” cried Little John.

“What is that boon thou begst of me, Little John?” said Robin.

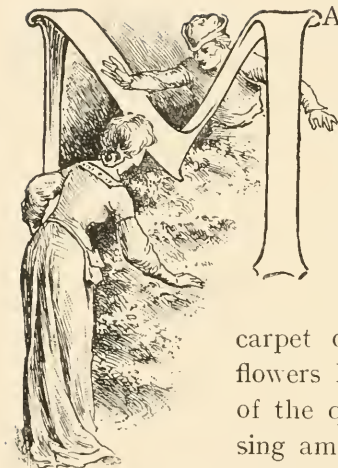
“It is to burn Kirkley Hall and all their nunnery,” cried John.

“Nay now, nay now, I will not grant thee that boon,” said Robin Hood. “I never hurt woman in all my life nor yet man that was in woman’s company. I never hurt fair maid in all my life, and shall not now at my end. But give me my bent bow in my hand, and I will let fly a broad arrow, and where this arrow is taken up, there shall you dig my grave.

“Lay me a green sod under my head,
And another at my feet;
And lay my bent bow at my side,
Which was my music sweet;
And make my grave of gravel and green,
Which is most right and meet.”

So Robin Hood drew his bow for the last time, and there where the arrow fell, under a clump of the green-wood trees, they dug the grave as he had said, and buried him.

Hynde Etin



MAID MARGARET stood at the door of her bower sewing her silken seam, but she heard the song of the wind in Elmond Wood, and sorely she longed to be there. She thought of the cool green depths of the forest, where the foot sinks deep in a soft carpet of moss, and all the pretty flowers look up with twinkling eyes; of the quiet thickets where the birds sing among the leaves, and the little squirrels leap from bough to bough; where soft, furry rabbits play hide-and-seek among the bracken in sandy hollows, and stately deer roam from glade to glade. The waving branches seemed to beckon to her, and the spirit of the greenwood called to her heart. Then down slipped the seam from her hand, and the needle fell at her feet, and Maid Margaret was away to Elmond Wood as fast as she could go.

Now in the wood there dwelt a strange half-savage man, who was called an "Etin," or ogre. He was so

Hynde Etin

fierce and shy that he shunned most people, and he seemed to consider that the forest belonged to him, and that no one had a right to go there. When he saw Maid Margaret he started up very angrily, and forbade her to touch the nuts she had just begun to gather.

“Let alone, lady,” he said roughly. “Why do you pluck the nuts? For I am the forester of this wood; you should ask leave of me.”

Margaret was astonished at his harsh tone, but never thinking there could be any harm in it, she plucked another nut.

“I have no wish at all to wrong you, Hynde Etin,” she said calmly.

But her words only made the Etin angrier than before, and taking her by her yellow locks he tied her to a tree.

“An ill death shall you die for slighting my commands!” he cried fiercely.

He pulled a big tree up by the roots, and he hacked out a deep, deep cave in the earth, into which he thrust Maid Margaret.

“Now rest you there, you saucy maid; my woods are free of you!” he said. “If I take you for my wife, you will like me the better. Choose, then—stay here and die in this cave, or be my wife.”

“Your wife, Hynde Etin? Never!” said Maid Margaret, at first, in scorn. But as time went on her spirit began to falter. No rest or sleep could she get in her prison; she had nothing but the cold earth to lie on, with a stone for her head. At last she begged the Etin to let her out.

“Oh, take me out,” she cried. “Take me to your

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own home, and I will be your bounden wife till the day I die !”

Hynde Etin took her out of the dungeon, and away she went with him to his own cave in the depths of the forest ; but it was a sad day when an Earl’s daughter went home with Hynde Etin.

Well, they lived in Elmond Wood for ten long years, and though the Etin was wild and half-savage, and never let Margaret go back to her own people, yet in his own way he loved her very dearly, and she grew to love him. They had seven pretty sons, but it was a great grief to the mother that none of them had been christened, or ever been inside a church. Always at night, with harp in hand, she harped them to sleep, and she sat by their bedside, weeping bitterly.

“ Ten long years have I lived now within this stone cave,” she sighed, “ and never once have I entered a good church door, or heard the church bells ring.”

It befell one day that the Etin went from home, and he took with him his eldest son.

“ Father,” said the boy, as they went along, “ I should like to ask a question, if you would not be angry with me.”

“ Say on, my bonny boy, say on,” said Hynde Etin ; “ you will never be scolded by me.”

“ I see my mother’s cheeks always wet. Alas, they are seldom dry !” said the boy.

“ No wonder, my bonny boy,” said the Etin sadly— “ no wonder if she should pine away and die of grief. Your mother was an Earl’s daughter, sprung from high



“But he has ta'en her by the yellow locks,
And tied her till a tree ;
And said, ‘For slichting my commands,
An ill death ye sall dree.’”

Hynde Etn

degree. She might have wedded the highest in the land if I had not stolen her away. But we will shoot the lark up in the clouds, and the little bunting on the tree, and you shall carry them home to your mother, and see if she will be any merrier."

To his simple nature it seemed that possibly such things as this might give pleasure to his wife.

Thus meditating what further he could do for her, it so happened that another day he suddenly went off in haste to hunt. This time the little boy did not go with him, and when the child found himself alone with his mother he said :

"Oh, I will tell you something, mother, if you will not be angry."

"Speak on, my bonny boy ; ask anything of me you like," said Margaret.

"As we came back from hunting, mother, I heard the church-bells ring."

"My blessings on you, my bonny boy, I wish I had been there alone," cried his mother. "My blessing on your heart, my boy ; O would I were there alone. I have not been in a holy church for twelve long years."

"O mother, come away now," cried the boy. "Let us go to church quickly."

He took his mother by the hand, and they called to the six little brothers, and away they all went through Elmond Wood as fast as they could go. Scarcely knowing where they went they stumbled along till they found themselves at the castle gate of Margaret's father.

"I have no money in my pocket," said Margaret, "but I have three royal rings. I will give them to you,

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my eldest son, and you must go into the castle for me. You will give the first ring to the porter, and he will let you enter ; you will give the next ring to the butler, and he will show you into the house ; you will give the third to the minstrel who is harping in the hall, and he will play success to the bonny boy who comes from the greenwood.”

So the little boy did as his mother bade him. He gave the first ring to the porter, and he opened the gate of the castle and let him in ; he gave the second to the butler who stood at the entrance door of the house, and he showed him inside ; and the third ring he gave to the minstrel who was harping in the hall, and he played success to the bonny boy who had come from the greenwood.

Now when the little lad came before the Earl, his grandfather, he fell on his knee before him. But the Earl turned his head away, and salt tears came into his eyes.

“Get up, get up, my bonny boy, and go away from here. You look so like my dear daughter, my heart is like to break.”

“And if I look like your dear daughter it is no wonder,” said the boy boldly, “for I am her eldest son.”

“Oh, tell me now, my little wee boy, where is my Margaret ?” cried the Earl.

“She is just now standing at your gate, and my six brothers are with her.”

“What ho, my serving men !” shouted the Earl. “Where are all the lazy rascals to whom I pay meat and fee ? To the gates, men ; fling them wide, and let her come in to me.”

Hynde Etin

So the gates were flung open, and in came Margaret with her six little sons, and fell low on her knee before the Earl.

“Get up, get up, my dear daughter,” said her father, embracing her tenderly. “This day you are to dine with me.”

“Nay, father, but I cannot eat nor drink till I have seen my dear mother and sister, for all these long, long years I have been thinking of them,” said Margaret. “And, father, I cannot eat a bit nor drink one drop till I have seen again my dear husband, for I think of him all the time.”

“Where are my bold rangers that keep my forest?” said the Earl. “Let them go forth and search far and wide till they find Hynde Etin, and bring him to me.”

So all the rangers went forth, and they searched the forest through and through, till at last they found the Etin in a lonely spot, weeping and tearing his yellow hair.

“Get up, get up, Hynde Etin, and come away with us. We are messengers come from our lord; the Earl wants to see you.”

“Oh, let him take my head from me, or hang me on a tree,” cried the Etin recklessly. “For since I have lost my dear lady life is no pleasure to me.”

“Your head will not be touched, Etin, nor will you be hanged on a tree,” said the rangers. “Your lady is in her father’s hall, and all he wants is you.”

Right gladly then the Etin went with the messengers, and when they came before the Earl, he fell low on his knee.

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“ Arise, arise, Hynde Etin, this day you are to dine with me,” said the Earl.

Great was the rejoicing when the father and mother and the seven little sons found themselves all together again.

As they sat at dinner : “ I wish we were at holy kirk to get our christening,” quoth the eldest little lad wistfully.

“ Your asking is not so great but that it shall be granted, my boy,” said the father. “ This day you shall go to the good church, and your mother shall go with you.”

When they came to the church Margaret stood at the door, and would not go in any further, for it was ten long years since she had been inside, and she felt quite cast down with shame.

But out spoke the parish priest, and he gave her a sweet smile. “ Come in, come in, my lily-flower, and present your babes to me.”

So Margaret led her seven little sons up to the good priest, and he took them, and blessed them, and christened them into the holy church. Their names were called Charles, Vincent, Sam, Dick, James and John, and the eldest was called the young Etin, after his father. And afterwards Margaret and her husband and the children all went back to stay in her father’s hall, and there they lived in much mirth and happiness.

The Jolly Harper



HERE was a jolly harper man who was always harping from town to town. He lived in Lochmaben in Scotland, and he made a wager with two knights that he would go into England, and steal a famous brown horse belonging to King Henry.

The knights laughed at the idea, and said it was quite impossible.

Sir Roger wagered five ploughs of land, and Sir Charles a thousand pounds, and John the Harper thereupon took the deed in hand, and said he would steal the horse.

Taking his harp, he mounted his good grey mare, and away he went, harping through all the country till he came to merry Carlisle. There at that moment the English King happened to be, and as he sat in his palace his ear caught the sound of the harping.

Now King Henry was very fond of music, and Harper John played as few men before or since have played.

The King looked from the window, and saw John,

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as he rode slowly through the town, harping all the time.

"Come in, come in, you harper man, let me hear some of your harping," said the King.

"Indeed, my liege, and by your grace I would rather have stabling for my mare," answered John-

"If you will go to yonder outer court, that stands a little below the town, you will find a stable very snug and neat, where my stately brown horse stands," said the King. "You may put your horse there."

So the harper went as he had been told, and found the stable in the outer court, and in it standing the King's horse. Then to the bridle of his own grey mare he fixed a good strong cord, and to this he fastened the brown horse, and afterwards, carefully shutting the stable door behind him, he went back to the palace.

Then he began his harping, and on and on he played till all who heard him forgot everything but the sweetness of his music. He harped on and on till the King and all his nobles were asleep, and then he stole very softly and quickly downstairs, and hied to the stable with a tread as light as could be.

Now the good grey mare had left a little foal behind at home, and all her thought was to get back to it as quickly as possible.

"If I set you free, away you will go, through mire and moss, and many a bog and hole, and never slacken speed, I warrant, till you get back home to your little foal," quoth John.

It happened just as he had reckoned. No sooner was the stable-door opened than out ran the mare, prancing



“And ay he harpit, and ay he carpit,
Till a’ the nobles were fast asleep;
Then . . . saftly down the stair did creep.”

The Jolly Harper

through the town, and away she galloped in the direction of her own home. And with her, tied to her bridle-rein, went King Henry's brown horse.

Through mire and moss, through many a bog and hole she ran ; she was right swift of foot, and never failed to find the way, and she was back at Lochmaben gate three hours before the dawn. When she came to the harper's door, she began to neigh and whinny.

"Get up, you lazy lass," said the harper's wife to her little maid ; "let in your master and his mare."

The maid got up and put on some clothes, but before opening the door she peeped through the keyhole.

"Oh, by my sooth," she cried, "our mare has gotten a braw brown foal !"

"Hold your tongue, you foolish lass ! It's only the moon shining in your eyes," said the mistress.

"I'll wager all my wages against a groat that it's bigger than ever our foal will be," said the girl.

So the harper's wife got up to see, and the neighbours, too, who had been roused by the noise, cried to her to put the horse in the stable.

"By my sooth, it's a better horse than ever he rode on !" said the wife.

All this while, in merry Carlisle, the harper had been harping to high and low, and not a thing could they do but listen to him till he had sent them all to sleep.

When King Henry awoke he was much surprised to find it was the next morning.

"Oh waken, waken, Jolly John !" he cried. "We

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have fairly slept till it is day. Get up, get up, man ; you shall give me some more of your harping."

"My liege, with all my heart," said John ; "but I must first go and see my good grey mare."

Forth he ran, but soon came back in a state of great grief, with many feigned tears dropping from his eyes.

"Some rogue has broken into the outer court, and stolen away my good grey mare !" he bewailed.

"Then, by my sooth," cried the King, "if there have been rogues in the town, I very much fear that as well as your grey mare my stately brown horse has gone."

"My loss is great, my loss is twice as great," lamented the harper. "In Scotland I lost a good grey steed, and now here I have lost a good grey mare."

"Oh well, come, come !" said the King. "Let me hear some of your music. You shall be well paid for it, John, and also for the loss of your good grey mare."

When John had received his money he went harping through the town, but little did King Henry think the harper was the clever thief who had stolen his fine brown horse.

The two knights with whom John had made the wager watched from the castle wall, from where they could see far away over dale and down, and by-and-by they saw the jolly harper come harping along the road to Stirling. But this time he was on foot, and not even riding his good grey mare.

"Have you really got back ? I doubt, my lad, you have ill sped in stealing the King's horse," laughed Sir Roger.

"I have been into fair England, even to merry Carlisle

The Jolly Harper

to King Henry's outer court," returned the harper, "and I have stolen the King's horse."

"You lie, you lie!" said Sir Charles. "And as loud as I've ever heard you. How could you have stolen the King's horse? Twelve armed men in shining mail guard the stable night and day."

"But I harped them all asleep, and managed my business cunningly," said Jolly John. "If you make light of what I say, come to the stable, and you shall see. My music pleased the King so much he wanted to hear more of it, and he paid me well for that, and also for my good grey mare."

Then he drew out a good long purse, well stored with gold and silver, and he very soon took them to his house, and let them see King Henry's horse, which the mare had led, tied to her bridle, to her own home.

After this the two knights could no longer doubt Jolly John had fairly won the wager, and Sir Roger handed over the five ploughs of land, and Sir Charles the thousand pounds.

Then the jolly harper restored back to Henry, the English King, his stately brown horse, which he had only stolen in jest.

Lizzie Lindsay



IN Edinburgh, two or three hundred years ago, there lived a lady whose name was Lizzie Lindsay. She was very rich and beautiful, and was courted by many fine suitors and persons of high renown. But Lizzie was hard to win. She was young and wayward, and had been spoilt, perhaps, by too much flattery. She treated her suitors with disdain, and the more they sighed and entreated her, the more she laughed and refused to listen to them.

The fame of the young Edinburgh beauty who was charming all hearts spread to wider circles, and reached even remote districts in the Highlands. The young laird of Kinguissie, Donald Macdonald, heard of her, and not only of her wit, high spirits, and beauty, but also of her coldness and caprice. Here was a bride to win, if only a man were bold and resolute ! He had never seen her, but he thought of her night and day, and nothing would satisfy him but he must go to Edinburgh and try to win her. He was a bonny lad,

Lizzie Lindsay

and in his own home was as much loved and petted as Lizzie Lindsay in hers. The thought of all the other suitors who had failed did not daunt him in the least.

“Let me have a year in the city, and I’ll come back, and that lady with me !” he said to his parents.

The old laird of Kinguissie, a merry old man, was much amused at young Donald’s assurance.

“What do you think of our little Donald boasting so proudly ?” he said to his wife. “But he shall have his year in the city, and as to what he can make of the lady, we will let him do as he can. Well, lad, you may go to Edinburgh City, and fetch home a lady with you. But see that you bring her without any flattery, and court her in great poverty,” he ended jestingly.

“My coat shall be of the plaiding, and I’ll wear a tartan kilt, and hosen, brogues and bonnet,” returned young Donald. “And I’ll court her with no flattery.”

So young Donald went to Edinburgh, where he soon had a chance of showing that he meant to keep his word. A grand ball was given in the city, and many fine ladies were there, but in all the assembly there was no one to compare with Lizzie Lindsay. In came the young laird of Kinguissie, and a bonny young lad he looked in his Highland dress, though many of the fine gentlemen in their suits of velvet or brocade affected to look with disdain at such a barbarous attire.

Young Donald soon found his way to the side of Lizzie Lindsay. He wasted no words in idle flattery, but stood silent for a while in the throng that were exchanging light words and jests with the gay young beauty. Lizzie

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was declaring she would have nothing to say to any of them, she was tired of them all. She was tired of Edinburgh. No, she had no wish to go to London. No, certainly not to France. Suddenly a blunt voice broke in upon her merry chatter.

“Will you leave the south country, lassie, and go to the Highlands with me?”

Lizzie turned to stare in astonishment at the bold young stranger who had made such a startling suggestion, and she gave a very loud laugh.

“I should like to know first where I am going, and who I am going with,” she answered.

“My father is an old shepherd, my mother an old dairy-woman. My name is Donald Macdonald,” said the young man; “I am proud of my name.”

Perhaps there was something about this very masterful young Highlander that caught the fancy of the spoilt beauty. Certainly his blunt ways were very different from the flattery and soft speeches of her other suitors. Moreover, he was a very bonny lad. In any case, she showed no serious anger at his presumption, and when he begged of her as a favour to tell him where she lived, she did not refuse his request.

“If you care to call at the Canongate port you can do so,” she said in a light tone. “I’ll give you a bottle of wine, and I’ll bear you company.”

Young Donald Macdonald lost no time in taking the young lady at her word, and as Lizzie Lindsay had promised, he was entertained with a bottle of good wine and her company. After that it was not a difficult matter to gain her favour. The lad was eager and impetuous,

Lizzie Lindsay

accustomed to carry everything before him. In glowing words he painted all the joy and beauty of his northern land ; he told her of the high and heathery hills, of the wide stretching moorlands open to all the winds of heaven, of the rushing torrents that plunged headlong from the misty heights, of babbling streams that splashed and foamed along their rocky channels, of the tranquil inland lochs where on the bosom of the quiet waters lay many a green islet. He told her of rugged mountain and wooded glen, of the bluebells that covered the ground like an azure veil, and the flaming gorse that glowed like golden fire on rugged heath and highway. He spoke of the soft-eyed Highland cattle with their shaggy hides and huge curving horns, of the stately deer that roamed on the lonely hills, or hid in caves and dens on the barren slopes, of the kingly fish with glittering coat of mail that lurked in secret pools, or leaped amid the spray of the foaming river.

And as Lizzie Lindsay listened she almost felt it would be no hardship to give up the city, even with its finery and gay doings, to lead a free and simple life in that fair north country of which Donald spoke, dwelling in a small cottage with him, and herding the wee lambkins.

“ Will you go to the Highlands with me, Lizzie Lindsay ?” cried young Donald again. “ Will you go to the Highlands with me, and dine on fresh curds and green whey ?”

But Lizzie’s mother, a very proud, stiff, old lady, was very angry that this penniless lad should try to coax away her daughter, who had been courted by so many fine suitors and wealthy persons of renown.

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"If you dare to steal my dear daughter it is hanged you will soon be," she exclaimed in wrath.

Young Macdonald was as fiery-tempered as herself, and his pride was up in arms at the insulting way in which she spoke to him.

He turned on his heel with a bounce, and laughed in scorn.

"There's no law in Edinburgh city this day that can dare to hang me!" he cried.

But Lizzie's bower-woman, Helen, a bonny young lassie, thought very differently from the old lady.

"Though I were born heir to a crown, I would go with young Donald," she declared boldly.

"Oh, Helen," said Lizzie, "would you give up an your money, and leave your fine silk kirtles, and go off with a poor bare-kneed Highland laddie, and leave father and mother and all?" Then, without waiting for an answer, she cried: "But I think he's a witch or a warlock, or something of that fell sort, for I'm going away with young Donald whatever my fortune may be."

Then up sprang the young lady and drew on her shoes and stockings, and kilted up her green gown, and away she went with young Donald Macdonald.

When they came to the Highlands the roads were rough and wild, and the braes were both long and steep. Through glens and over mountains they wandered, till poor Lizzie had scarcely a shoe, and was quite wearied out with walking, for she had travelled a long summer's day. "Alas, and ochone! sad was the first day I saw you," she said; "I would I were back in Edinburgh city, full sorely I rue this pastime. But even if I went back



“When that they cam to the Hielands,
The braes they were baith lang and stey;
Bonnie Lizzie was wearied wi’ ganging,
For she’d travelled a lang summer day.”

Lizzie Lindsay

to Edinburgh," she went on, the salt tears filling her eyes, "there is not a person who would care for me."

"Oh, hold your tongue now, Lizzie, for yonder is the shieling, my home," said Donald. "And there is my good old honest mother coming to meet you herself."

Lizzie now saw on the barren hillside a shieling, or very humble little dwelling, and out of it came hurrying to greet them a poorly-clad old dame.

"Oh, you are welcome, you are welcome, Sir Donald. You are welcome home to your own!" she cried, her face beaming with joy.

"Don't call me Sir Donald, call me young Donald, your son," whispered the young man hastily. They spoke in Gaelic, so that Lizzie could not understand what they said.

"Oh, come in, come in, bonny Lizzie, come in, come in!" went on the good dame. "Although our shieling is small, perhaps because of that we shall agree all the better."

"Now make us a supper, dear mother, the best of your curds and green whey," said Donald, when they were inside the cottage. The room was very dark and stuffy, and filled with peat smoke. "And after that make up a nice bed of green rushes, and cover it over with hay."

It was a strange bed for the dainty city lady, but Lizzie was so tired with her journey she was glad to rest anywhere. The next morning it was well on into the day before she rose, and then she felt very sad at the thought of her surroundings, and the rough life that lay before her.

"You might have been up an hour sooner to milk both the cows and the ewes," said Donald.

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“O, hold your tongue, Donald, pray,” cried Lizzie. and then she quite broke down, and began to weep. “I wish I had never left my mother! I cannot milk ewes nor cows either. O, if I were back in Edinburgh city, the Highlands would see no more of me!—although I love young Donald Macdonald, the lad with the bonny blue eyes,” she added, hastily relenting.

“Get up, get up, Lizzie, and put on your fine silk dress,” said Donald, “for we must go up to Kinguissie, where I have played many a day.”

So they left the cottage, and went on some way further, and then in front of them they saw a fine castle, with walls and turrets and towers. As they drew near, the warder on the battlements gave a call, and a lusty porter flew to fling wide the door.

“Oh, you are welcome home, Sir Donald, you have been so long away!” he shouted aloud in his pleasure.

Then forth came the old laird of Kinguissie, a stately and gallant gentleman.

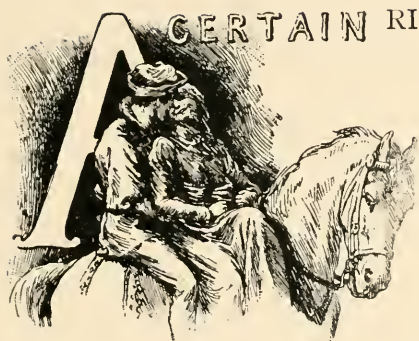
“You are welcome, Lizzie Lindsay, you are welcome home! Lords of renown have courted you, but young Donald has won your favour. You will get all the lands of Kinguissie, and Donald Macdonald, my son.”

Then down came the young laird’s mother, a gentle and gracious old lady, holding in her hand all the keys of the household.

“Take you these, bonny Lizzie,” she said. “Everything under them is at your command.”

“You are wife to the great Macdonald, so rue not you have come to the Highlands, rue not you have come off with me!” said the young chieftain.

The Crafty Lover



A CERTAIN RICH counsellor had an only daughter, who was very beautiful. She had been left large possessions by an uncle, and her father was appointed guardian. She had ten thousand pounds a year, and always

plenty of ready gold and silver. She was courted by many a rich nobleman, but no one could gain the lady. At last the youngest son of a squire came wooing in private, but when he succeeded in gaining her favour he feared he had only brought ruin on himself, for it was a serious matter to win such a wealthy bride without her guardian's consent.

The young lady confessed that she loved him with all her heart ; she had refused lords and knights, but the squire's son she prized above them all. " But this is the trouble," she said. " I fear you will be doomed to die for stealing an heiress."

But the young man was wise and quick-witted.

" Thy father is a counsellor, I will tell him how the

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matter stands," he answered. "Ten guineas shall be his fee, and he will never guess it is about his own daughter I have gone to consult him; he will think it is someone else, and will tell me how I can keep out of danger."

So the very next day the young man went to the father to ask his advice as to how he was to act with regard to the heiress who had promised to marry him. When the lawyer saw the gold of which he hoped to be the gainer he told the young man of a pleasant trick by which he could safely carry off the lady, and yet get into no trouble himself.

"Let her provide a horse, and take you up behind her," he said, "and then ride to some parson before her parents get hold of her. You can then complain that it is she who has stolen you, and not you her, and so you can avoid their anger. Now this is law I will maintain, before either judge or jury. Take my writing and seal, which I cannot deny, and if you get yourself into any trouble, I will stand by you in court."

"I give you my best thanks," cried the young man; "you have greatly befriended me. And after the deed is done, I will bring my bride to your house."

The next morning, before the break of day, the crafty lover carried the news to the young lady, who at once availed herself of her father's counsel, and the young couple were fairly married. After the wedding they began to feel rather ill at ease, and with some doubt and fear they returned home, and falling on their knees before the bride's father, begged his blessing.

But when the counsellor beheld them he became like

The Crafty Lover

one distracted, and swore to be revenged on them both for the way in which they had acted.

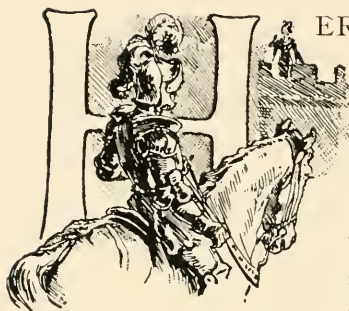
But up spoke his new-made son.

“There can be no denying that what we have done is good law,” he said. “Here is your own handwriting and seal.”

The lawyer was quite taken a-back, but he knew it would be no avail to dispute the matter, and the cleverness of the trick helped to soften his vexation.

“I cannot deny my hand and seal,” he said ; “you have outwitted me. My daughter was left ten thousand pounds a year by my brother, and when I die she will have more, for I have no other child. She might have married some lord or knight of royal descent, but since you are her heart’s delight I will not be offended. If I should try to part you now it would be most cruel. Enjoy your love, with all my heart, in peace, plenty, and pleasure.”

Proud Lady Margaret



HER father was lord of nine castles, and her mother was lady of three, and the Lady Margaret was cousin to a king and as proud and vain as could be. She wasted her wealth on gay clothes, and spent all her time from morning till night adorning herself.

One night, on a bright evening, when the dew began to fall, Lady Margaret was walking up and down on the castle ramparts, and looking about to see what she could spy. She looked east and she looked west, and by-and-by she saw a gallant knight, who came riding near under the castle wall.

"God make you safe and free, fair maid!" said the stranger in courtly greeting.

The proud Lady Margaret did not deign to give him a civil answer. but eyed him up and down with insolent scorn.

"You seem to be no gentleman, you wear your boots so wide," she said. "But you seem to be some cunning hunter, with that horn slung so low at your side. What is your will with me?"



"'Twas on a night, an evening bright,
When the dew began to fall,
Lady Margaret was walking up and down,
Looking over the castle wall."

Proud Lady Margaret

“I am no cunning hunter, nor ever intend to be,” said the knight. “But I have come to this castle to seek your love, and if you do not grant me that love this night I will die for you.”

“If you should die for me, sir knight, there are few who will mourn for you,” returned the lady haughtily. “For many better men have already died for me, whose graves are growing green.”

“Oh, will you not pity me, fair maid? Will you not pity a courteous knight whose love is all given to you?”

“You say you are a courteous knight, but I think you are none. I think you are but a miller lad by the colour of your clothing. But come, you must read my riddle, and answer me three questions. And unless you can answer them right, you can stretch yourself out and die. Now which is the flower, the one first flower, that springs on moor or dale? And what is the bird, the bonny, bonny bird, that sings sweetest next to the nightingale? And what is the finest thing that King or Queen can choose?”

“The primrose is the first flower that springs on moor or dale; and the thistle-cock, or thrush, is the bird that sings sweetest next to the nightingale; and yellow gold is the finest thing that King or Queen can choose.”

Lady Margaret was astonished to find the stranger knight answer her questions so quickly and easily, but she was not willing to own herself beaten, so she went on asking some more, hoping to puzzle him.

“But what is the little coin that would buy up all my castle?” she said. “And what is the little boat that can sail all round the world?”

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“ Ah, and how many small pennies make thrice three thousand pounds ?” laughed the knight. “ Ah, and how many small fishes swim all round the salt sea ?”

“ I think you must be my match—my match and something more,” admitted Lady Margaret. “ You are the first that ever got the grant of love from my father’s heir. My father was lord of nine castles, and my mother was lady of three,” she went on in a boastful voice, “ and there’s no heir but myself, unless it be my only brother, Willie ; but he is far beyond the sea. And round about all those castles lie wide and fertile lands that you may sow and plough ; and so rich is the soil that by the fifteenth of May you can mow the grass in the meadows.”

“ O, hold your tongue, Lady Margaret, for loud I hear you lie,” said the knight. “ Your father was lord of nine castles, and your mother was lady of three. Your father was lord of nine castles, but you fall heir to only three of them. And round all those castles lie fertile lands that you can plough and sow, but on the fifteenth day of May you cannot mow the grass in the meadows.

“ I am your brother Willie,” he went on, while Lady Margaret stood silent and abashed before his stern rebuke. “ I trow you do not know me. I came to humble your haughty heart, which has caused so many to die.”

“ If you be my brother Willie,” said Lady Margaret, “ as I think very well you are, this night I will neither eat nor drink, but will go along with you.”

“ O, hold your tongue, Lady Margaret ; again I hear you lie,” said the knight sternly. “ You cannot come with me ; you are not yet made ready. You have over ill-washen hands, and over ill-washen feet, and over-coarse

Proud Lady Margaret

robes on your body to go along with me. Those that go where I go must be cleansed from head to foot, and fine white raiment must shroud them. For the wee worms are my bed-fellows, and the cold clay is my sheet, and the higher that the wind blows the sounder do I sleep. My body is buried in Dunfermline, far beyond the sea, but I cannot get rest in my grave, all for your pride. Leave pride, Margaret,—leave pride, Margaret,—leave pride and vanity! Before you see the sights that I have seen, sorely you must have altered, or when you come where I have been, bitterly you will repent it. Cast off, sister, the gold band from your head, for if you come where I have been you will wear it lower down. When you are in the holy kirk, the gold pins in your sleeve, you take more delight in your foolish dress than you do in your morning prayer. And when you walk so proudly in the kirkyard, and flaunt your gay clothes in the sight of all, there is not a lady that sees your face but wishes your grave were green. Straight and tall you are, and handsome, but your pride overbears your wisdom, and if you do not take heed to your ways, in Pirie's chair you will sit. In Pirie's chair you will sit, I say, and that is the lowest seat of hell. If you do not amend your ways, it is there you will have your abiding-place."

Thus spoke the knight in solemn warning, and with that, in the twinkling of an eye, he vanished from her sight, and nothing more saw the Lady Margaret but the gloomy clouds and sky.

Catskin

The Wandering Young Gentlewoman



HERE was once a young squire, and as he was the possessor of vast estates he much wished to have a son to inherit them. His first child, however, was a dear little daughter of rare beauty.

“Had this child been a boy it would have pleased me better,” he said to his wife. “If the next be of the same sort I

declare it shall have no share in my possessions.”

The next year another child was born, but this time again it was a beautiful little daughter. When he knew it was only a girl the squire fell at once into a bitter passion, saying : “ Since this is the same kind as the first, she shall not be brought up in my house ; pray let her be

Catskin

sent into the country, for where I am truly this child must not be.'

His wife with tears tried to soothe him.

"Husband, be contented, I will send her away," she said, and then she speedily sent her dear little baby away to the country to be brought up by one who was her friend.

Although her father hated her because she was not the son he so much desired, he bestowed on his daughter a good education, and took care that she had everything that befitted her rank and condition. The slighted young damsel was, indeed, always dressed in the finest of clothes, and had plenty of rich jewels. But when she was grown up, and found that her father had never shown any love for her, she resolved that rather than stay any longer under his displeasure she would go forth to travel through the country, and seek her own living.

With this end in view she set to work and made herself a curious robe of catskins, which she wore every day as a covering. Her own rich attire and jewels she tied up in a bundle to carry with her, and in this guise she wandered off to seek her fortune.

After travelling all a cold winter's day she came at eventide to a town, and being sorely tired she sat herself down to rest at a knight's door. The wife of the knight came to the door, and seeing the pretty maiden in such a strange sort of dress, demanded: "Whence camest thou, girl, and what wouldst thou have?"

"A night's rest in your stable is all I crave," answered Catskin.

"I will grant what you ask," said the lady. "Come into the kitchen and stand by the fire."

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Catskin thanked the lady and went in at once, and there she was gazed at by everyone, from the highest to the lowest. When she was well warmed she was very hungry, and they gave her a plate of good food to eat ; then she was taken to an outhouse stored with fresh straw, and with that she soon made herself a bed. The next morning, as soon as she saw daylight, she hid her bundle of rich clothes and jewels among the straw, and then, being very cold, she went again into the kitchen, and stood by the fire.

“ My lady hath promised that thou shalt be as a scullion to wait on me,” said the cook. “ What sayest thou, girl, art thou ready to bide ?”

“ Truly, with all my heart,” said the squire’s daughter.

She knew well how to work with her needle, and for the lightness of her pastry few could excel her. Being so handy she soon won the favour of the cook, and from the strange robe she always wore she was called by the nickname of “ Catskin.”

Now the lady had a son both tall and comely, who often used to go to a ball which was held about a mile out of the town. One evening, as he rode away as usual to go to this ball, a sudden longing came over Catskin to see once more the sort of life to which she had been accustomed.

“ Pray, madam, let me go after your son now to see this ball,” she said to the wife of the knight.

Such a request from her little scullion greatly astounded her mistress, and falling into a great passion at what she considered her impertinence she struck her with the ladle which she happened to have in her hand, and broke

Catskin

it in two. Catskin was very indignant at this rough treatment, and having plenty of spirit she quickly made her escape, and running to her outhouse she arrayed herself in her rich garments and speedily repaired to the ball. Here she danced so bravely that everyone admired her, and in especial the son of the knight was struck by this beautiful young stranger. When the dancing was done, he said to her : “ Young lady, where do you live ? I pray you, tell me.”

In those days every house in a town, instead of having a name or a number, had some painted sign by which it could be distinguished. So in answer to the young squire’s question Catskin replied gaily :

“ Sir, that is easily done. I dwell at the sign of the ‘ Broken Ladle ’ ; ” and then, being very nimble, she slipped away, and got home first, and was quickly attired again in her catskin robe. Then she went back once more into the kitchen, and none of them knew where she had been.

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At the Sign of the "Broken Skimmer"



NOW THE next night nothing would content the young Squire but he must go again to the ball, for he hoped that the beautiful young maiden would again be there, and that he would be able to find out where she dwelt. As before, Catskin asked the knight's lady : " Pray, let me view this ball," and as before the lady flew into a great

passion, and this time she struck the little scullion with the skimmer, and broke it in two.

Catskin, angry at such harsh treatment, ran to her out-house, hastily dressed herself in her rich garments, and hurried away with all speed to the ball. Here, as before, everyone wondered at her beautiful dancing. The ball being ended, the young squire again asked her : " Where is it you live ?"

" Sir, since you ask me, I will tell you. At the sign of the ' Broken Skimmer ' I live," answered Catskin. Then she skipped away in the dark, hurried home, and was soon

Catskin

dressed again in her catskins and back in the kitchen, but no one imagined where she had been.

When the young squire got home and saw Catskin there he was all in a maze.

“For two nights at the ball there has been a lady, the sweetest of beauties that ever I saw,” he exclaimed. “She was the best dancer in the whole place, and she was very much like our Catskin here. Had she not been dressed in such a costly fashion I should have sworn it was Catskin herself.”

The next night he went again to the ball, and once more Catskin asked the knight’s wife if she might go too. This time the good dame happened to have in her hand a basin of water, and in her rage at the little scullion’s presumption she threw it all over her. Shaking her wet ears as if she had indeed been a little pussy-cat, Catskin ran away, dressed herself in her rich attire, and went to the ball, where again everyone praised her dancing. At the end the young squire begged her once more to tell him from whence she came.

“Sir, you shall soon know that,” answered Catskin merrily. “I come from the sign of the ‘Basin of Water’;” and with that she hurried home as fast as could be.

But the young squire, who was quite resolved to see where she really belonged, this time followed her quickly, and he saw her creep into the old straw house.

“Oh, brave Catskin, I find it is thou who these three nights together hast so charmed me,” he exclaimed. “Thou art the sweetest creature my eyes have ever

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beheld, and my heart is filled with joy. Thou art our cook's scullion, but I swear as I am a living man, grant me but thy love, and I will make thee my wife, and thou shalt have maids to be at thy call."

"Sir, that cannot be," said Catskin, "I have no marriage portion."

"Thy beauty is thy portion, my dearest love," cried the young squire. "I prize it far more than a dowry of thousands a year. And to get my friends' consent I have thought of a trick. I will go to bed, and pretend to be very ill, and will refuse to allow any one to attend me, but thee. Then one day or another thou shalt be clad in thy richest dress, and if my parents come near, I shall tell them it is for thee I am lying sick."

This being arranged, the young couple parted.

The next day the young squire took to his bed, at which his parents were right sorely grieved, for fear lest he should die. They sent in haste for a nurse to tend him, but he declared that no one but Catskin should be his nurse. His parents at first said, "No," but he said he would either have Catskin or no nurse at all.

Both his father and mother were astonished to hear him say this, but in order to content him they were obliged to agree, so up into his chamber the poor little scullion was sent. Sweet cordials and other rich dainties were prepared, which the young people shared equally between them, and when they were left alone together they enjoyed many happy hours of loving converse.

At last, it happened one day, when Catskin had arrayed herself in all her rich attire, that the knight's wife came



“Then homeward she hurried as fast as could be;
This young squire was then resolved to see
Where she belonged, and following Catskin,
Into an old straw house he saw her creep in.”

Catskin

to her son's chamber. The sight of this wonderful creature, who in her dazzling robe looked more like some goddess than a mortal, caused her to stare in amazement.

"What young lady is this, pray?" she demanded.

"It is Catskin, for whom I am lying sick," answered her son. "And unless I can marry her at once, I shall die."

His mother hastened to call her husband, who ran up to see this astonishing sight.

"Is this Catskin, whom we have held in such scorn?" said the old knight. "I never saw a finer dame in my life. Prithee, tell me from whence thou camest, and of what family?"

Then the maiden gave them to know who were her parents, and what was the cause of her wandering.

"If you wish to save my life, pray grant that I may marry this young creature," implored the squire.

"In order to save your life, if you are agreed together, you may have my consent," replied his father.

The next day, with great joy and triumph, many coaches came from far and wide, and arrayed like some goddess in all her rich array Catskin was wedded to the young squire. The marriage festivities lasted several days; many splendid banquets were held, the bells rang out for joy all over the town, and bottles of canary rolled merrily round. All who were present at the wedding praised Catskin's modest bearing, and her fame spread all through the country. Thus the young squire won his beautiful bride, and who now lived in such happiness and prosperity as he and Catskin?

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We will now turn for a moment to Catskin's family, from which she had been so unjustly thrust out when a little baby. By this time her mother and sister were both dead, and the old squire, her father, was left alone. In his solitude he began to feel remorseful for the unkind way in which he had treated his little daughter, and hearing she was so grandly married a fancy came into his head.

"Dressed like a poor man, I will now make a journey, and see if she will take some pity on me," he said to himself.

So, attired like a beggar, he went to her gate, where stood his daughter, looking very grand and stately.

"Lady, I am a poor man, who am now forced to ask charity," said the old squire.

With a sweet blush Catskin asked him whence he came, whereupon he told her, and also his name. When she heard who he was, instead of turning from him in anger, as she might well have done, Catskin cried :

"I am your daughter whom you slighted so, yet, nevertheless, I will show you kindness. Through mercy, the Lord hath provided for me ; pray, then, come in, father, and sit down."

Then, to make him welcome, the best provisions the house could afford were set before him.

"You are welcome, pray feed heartily," said Catskin. "And if you are willing, you shall stay with me as long as you live."

At this proof of his daughter's sweet and generous nature the old squire's heart was quite melted.

"I have only come now to test thy love," he cried.

Catskin

“Through mercy, dear child, I am rich, and not poor. I have good store of gold and silver, and for this love which I have found at thy hands I will give thee for thy marriage portion ten thousand pounds.”

So in a few days the old squire went home and sold off all his land. He gave ten thousand pounds to his daughter, and afterwards they all lived together in love and happiness.

Lord Beichan



YOUNG Beichan was born in London, a noble lord of high degree, but he longed so greatly to see foreign countries that he shipped himself on board a vessel, and set forth to travel through the world. He sailed East, and he sailed West, and he passed through many great kingdoms, until he came to grand Turkey. Here he was taken prisoner by a savage Moor, who handled him right cruelly, for having seen the fashions of the country, and their way of worship, young Beichan would never bend the knee to Mahomet or any other of their false prophets. He was therefore carried straight before their high judge, and the savage Moor caused him to suffer great hardship. On each shoulder they put a yoke, into which they fixed shafts, and thus harnessed, he was compelled to drag heavy carts and waggons of wine and spices.

The toil and misery made him fall sick, till he was almost like to die, but in spite of all his captors' cruelty

Lord Beichan

young Beichan remained steadfast to his own faith, and nothing would induce him to swerve from it. Then they cast him into a deep dungeon, where he could neither hear nor see, and there they kept him for seven long years, almost dying of cold and hunger. In his prison there grew a tree, very stout and strong, and to this young Beichan was chained, until, indeed, he grew very weary of his life.

Now, the Moor had one only daughter, called Sophia. A fairer creature was never seen, and although she came of evil kin, she was gentle and sweet and good. Every day, as she walked out to take the air, she passed near Beichan's prison, and often she sighed, she knew not why, for the hapless stranger who lay in the dungeon.

It befell one day that she heard him sadly singing, and she stayed to listen to his tale of woe—a happy day for young Beichan !

The words he sang kept ringing in her ears, and do what she could, she could not forget them. This is how they ran :

“ My hounds they all go masterless,
My hawks they fly from tree to tree ;
My younger bro her will heir my land,
My native shore I'll never see !”

The Moor's daughter went back to her own chamber, and all night she never closed her eyes for thinking of young Beichan's song. When the day began to dawn she managed to steal the keys from under her father's head as he lay asleep, and away she went alone to the prison.

“ Oh, if only I were the prison-keeper, as I am a lady

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of high degree," she said to herself, "I would soon set this youth at large, and send him back to his own country."

She gave the warder a piece of gold and several pieces of silver money, and he opened the prison door and let her in. The keys of the inner chambers she had herself, but she had to open many doors before she came to the cell where young Beichan was, so securely was he locked up.

She found the captive lying in a sweet sleep, but he sprang up, startled at her entrance, and wondering greatly at the sight of her. He took the maid for some fellow-prisoner.

"Oh, who is this that awakens me before my sleep was gone?" he cried. "Oh, well was I out over the sea, for I dreamt I was home once more in my own country."

"Have you any lands or castles in your own country?" asked the maid. "And what would you give to the lady who would set you free out of prison?"

"I have houses and lands and many a fair castle in my own country," answered young Beichan, "and I would give them all to the lady who would set me free out of prison."

"Give me the troth of your right hand that for seven long years you will wed with no lady unless it be with me," said the Moor's daughter.

"I'll give you the troth of my right hand, I will give it you freely, that for seven years I will stay unwed, for the sake of the kindness you show me."

Then the Moor's daughter gave gold and silver money to the warder, and she got the keys of the outer door of the prison, and set young Beichan free. She gave him

Lord Beichan

to eat good spice cake, and she gave him to drink good blood-red wine, and she drank to him a brave health—"I wish, Lord Beichan, that you were mine!"—and she bade him think sometimes of her who had freed him from toil and captivity.

"For seven long years I will make a vow, and for seven long years I will keep it true," she said. "If you will not wed with any other woman, I will not wed with any other man."

She broke a ring from her finger, and gave half of it to Beichan.

"Keep this to remind you of that love the lady bore who set you free."

She took him to her father's harbour, and she gave him a fine ship.

"Farewell, farewell, Lord Beichan! Shall I ever see you again?" she said. "Set your foot on board the good ship, and hasten back to your own country; and before seven years are ended come back again, love, and marry me."

Lord Beichan turned for his last greeting, and lowly, lowly he bent to salute his fair lady.

"Ere seven years have come to an end I will take you home to my own country," he said.

Lord Beichan set sail for the shores of England, and a happy man was he when he found himself safe once more in London town. The fame of wonderful adventures spread abroad, and all the ladies came thronging around him to see the traveller who had escaped from slavery.

His mother had died of sorrow, and all his brothers, too, were dead; his lands were all lying waste, and his

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castles were in ruins. No porter stood at his gate, no human creature could he see ; except the bats and screeching owls, he had nothing to bear him company.

But gold can make castles grow again, and Lord Beichan had gold and jewels in plenty. Gay gallants soon thronged around him once more to cheer him with their company, and in a constant round of merry sport the days slipped rapidly onward.

But to the Moor's daughter, away in her own country across the sea, the time dragged slowly and heavily. Sorely, sorely she longed to see her love once more. No rest could she get ; she thought of him day and night, so that presently she grew sick and like to die. Within her breast a voice seemed always to be saying : " Beichan has broken his vow to thee."

At last, when seven long years were passed and gone, she could bear it no longer. She set her foot on board a good ship, and turned her back on her own country, and away she sailed in search of her lover.

She sailed East and she sailed West, till at last she came to the pleasant shores of England. And there on a plain she spied a bonny shepherd feeding his flocks.

" What news, what news hast thou to tell me, bonny shepherd ?" she asked.

" Such news I hear, lady, the like was never in this country," he answered. " There is a wedding in yonder hall, and it has lasted three and thirty days ; but now they say the young Lord Beichan will still hold himself aloof from the bride, for the love of one who is beyond the sea."

Lord Beichan

“Now take you that, my bonny boy, for the good news you have told me !” cried Sophia ; and she thrust a handful of gold and silver on the astonished lad.

When she came to Lord Beichan’s gate she rattled softly at the pin, and the lusty warder was ready to open and let in this dazzling lady. When she came to the castle she rang the bell boldly.

“Who is there ? Who is there ?” cried the porter.

“Is this Lord Beichan’s castle, and is that noble lord within ?” asked Sophia.

“Yes, he is in the hall, among them all, and this is the day of his wedding,” said the porter.

“Has he wedded another love ? And has he clean forgotten me ?” said the lady, and she sighed. “I wish I were back in my own country !”

She took the half of the gold ring she had broken with her lover, and she said to the man :

“Give him that, you proud porter, and bid the bridegroom come and speak to me. Tell him to send me a slice of bread, and a cup of blood-red wine, and bid him remember the lady’s love who delivered him from captivity.”

Away went the bold porter, and he never stopped till he came to Lord Beichan’s presence, where he fell on his bended knee.

“What aileth thee, my good man, that thou art so full of courtesy ?” demanded his master.

“I have been porter at your gates these three-and-thirty years,” cried the man, “but there stands a lady at them now, the fairest that my two eyes have ever seen, and the like of whom I never beheld before. For on

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every finger she has a ring, and on the middle finger three, and as much shining gold above her brow as would buy me an earldom."

Then out spoke the bride's mother, and an angry woman was she.

"The fairest lady you ever saw!" she echoed. "You might have excepted our bonny bride, and two or three of the company."

"Madam, your daughter is fair enough, but this lady is ten times fairer than she ever was at her fairest. My lord, she begs a slice of your bread, and a cup of your best wine; and she bids you remember the love of the lady who freed you from captivity."

Then up sprang Lord Beichan, in his haste knocking over the table.

"I would give all my yearly rents that it were Sophia come over the sea!" he cried.

Down the stairs he leapt, of fifteen steps he made but three, and he caught his bonny love in his arms and tenderly kissed her again and again.

"Oh, have you taken another bride? And have you quite forgotten me?" said the Moor's daughter. "Have you forgotten one who gave you life and liberty?" She turned away her head to hide the tears in her eyes. "Now, fare you well, young Beichan; I will try to think of you no more."

"Oh, never, never, my dear Sophia; that must never be!" cried Lord Beichan. "I will never wed anyone but her who has done and endured so much for me."

Then out spoke the bride of the forenoon.

"My lord, your love is soon changed. In the morning



"And quickly bled he down the stair,
Of fifteen steps he made but three;
He's ta'en his bonny love in his arms,
And kist, and kist her tenderlie."

Lord Beichan

I am made your bride, and another is chosen before noon !”

“ Oh, sorrow not, lady,” said young Beichan, “ our hearts could never be united. You must return to your own country, and I will send with you a double dower.”

But the bride’s mother spoke in anger.

“ You will not forsake my only daughter, even though Sophia has crossed the sea ?”

“ Take home your daughter, madam ; she is none the worse for me,” said young Beichan. “ She came to me riding on horseback ; she shall go home in her chariot with three horses.”

He took Sophia by her milk-white hand, and led her through his stately halls, and as he kissed her rosy lips he said :

“ You are welcome, dear one, to your own.”

He took her by the hand, and led her to the fountain in the court of the castle, and there they baptized the Moor’s daughter ; and he changed her name from Sophia, and called her his bonny Lady Jane.

“ Now tell all the cooks to make ready, and let the pipers play,” he ordered. “ And let all the trumpets sound through the town, for we will have another marriage. I’ll range no more in foreign countries, since my love has crossed the sea to come to me.”

King Lear and His Three Daughters



ING LEAR once ruled in Britain with great power and peace; he had everything that could content his heart and add to his joy. Among other good gifts of Nature he had three fair daughters, all so royally beautiful that none could compare with them.

So all went well till one luckless day, when it occurred to the King, who was then growing old, to ask this question—which of his three daughters could show the greatest love to him.

“For you bring delight to my old age,” quoth he. “Let me hear, therefore, which of you three, in plighted troth, will appear the kindest.”

The eldest daughter, Regan, at once began to profess her affection in the most extravagant terms.

“Dear father,” she exclaimed, “remember, I would give my blood, here, before your face, to do you any good! For your sake, my bleeding heart shall here be

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cut in twain before I would see your reverend age endure the smallest grief.”

“And so will I,” chimed in the second daughter, Goneril ; “I will gladly undertake the worst of all extremities for your sake, dear father. I will serve your highness night and day with constant love and diligence, so that sweet content and peace may soothe all trouble from your path.”

“In doing so, you gladden my soul,” replied the aged King, much pleased with the glib responses of his two eldest daughters. “But what sayst thou, my youngest girl ? In what way wilt thou show thy love to me ?”

The gentle Cordelia, who knew but too well the selfish cruel natures of her eldest sisters, made no attempt to vie with their hypocritical speeches.

Fixing her frank and candid gaze on her father, she said simply :

“My love which I owe to your grace shall be the duty of a child to its parent ; that is all that I will show.”

King Lear, who after the noisy protests from his two eldest daughters, had expected something even more eager and affectionate from his favourite child, was deeply disappointed at such an answer. In his jealous wrath he quite failed to see the loyalty and love that lay under Cordelia’s words, compared with the falsehood and exaggeration of her sisters’.

“What ! Wilt thou show me no more than what thy duty binds ?” he demanded harshly. “I well perceive thy love is small when I find no more than that. Away, Cordelia ! Henceforth I banish thee from my court ; no longer art thou child of mine ! Nor shall any part of

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this my realm fall to the. Thy elder sister's loves are more than I can justly demand. To them equally, therefore, I bestow my kingdom and my lands, my pomp and state, and all my goods, that I may be maintained by them until my dying day."

Thus the flattering speeches of the two eldest daughters won them wealth and renown, while the youngest child had causeless banishment, though her love was really greater and more true. Poor Cordelia left her father's court, and went patiently wandering up and down, unhelpt and unpitied, through many an English hamlet. At last she crossed the sea to France, where she found gentler fortune. For here, though poor and friendless, she was deemed the loveliest lady in the land, and when the King of France heard of her virtues, and beheld her for himself, with the full consent of all his court he made her his wife and Queen.

In the meanwhile her father, old King Lear, had been staying, as he planned, with his two daughters. But now, alas, he saw the falseness of their flattering words. Forgetful of the love they had promised him, they soon denied it, and the aged King was speedily treated with unkindness and open disrespect. He stayed at first at the court of Regan, his eldest daughter, who soon stripped him of all his means and most of his attendants. For whereas he had formerly had twenty gentlemen-at-arms to serve him on bended knee, she quickly dismissed this train, declaring that ten, or five, or even three, would be enough—in fact, *one* would be too many, for her father could easily be waited on by her own attendants. So

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she took all his men away, hoping by this means to drive King Lear from her court.

Indignant at such treatment from one on whom he had lavished so much, the King took his departure from the heartless woman, and repaired to his second daughter, Goneril.

“Am I rewarded thus, in giving all I have to my children,” he quoth bitterly, “and to have to beg for what was but lately my own ! I will go to my Goneril. My second child, I know, will be more kind and pitiful, and will relieve my misery.”

Away, then, to Goneril’s court he hurried in full haste. But when this heartless woman heard his complaint she returned him answer she was sorry all his means were gone, but she could in no way relieve his wants. If, however, he stayed in her kitchen, he should have what the scullions gave away.

Scarcely able to believe he heard aright, King Lear broke forth in bitter upbraiding of such shameless ingratitude.

“Let all men take example by what I did !” he exclaimed. “I will return again to Regan’s court. She surely will not use me thus, but in a kindlier manner.”

But when the hapless King got back to Regan’s castle she gave commands that he was to be driven away, for, she declared, he would never settle down contentedly in her court. Back, therefore, to Goneril he now trudged, to seek a refuge even in her kitchen, and to have what the scullion boys set by. But even this was now denied him. Since he had at first refused it, Goneril declared he should not now enter her gate.

Thus betwixt his daughters, seeking relief, King Lear

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wandered to and fro, he who lately wore a crown glad to eat beggar's food. Now he called to remembrance the words of his youngest daughter, who had said the duty of a child was all the love she would show. Too late did King Lear realise all the meaning that lay in these simple words ; he was afraid to repair to her whom he had so unjustly banished. In his anguish and despair he presently lost his reason, and now, quite mad, he roamed the hills and woods, pouring forth his piteous moan to trees and senseless things, and with his milk-white locks floating bare to all the winds that blew.

Thus, in time, he presently passed over to France, hoping to find some gentler treatment from the fair Cordelia. And his trust was not in vain. No sooner did the noble lady hear of her father's distress than she at once sent comfort and relief, giving orders that a train of noble peers, in brave and gallant guise, should conduct him to her court.

Her husband, the noble-minded King of France, freely gave consent to muster up his knights-at-arms, and send them forth to avenge the wrongs of the hapless wanderer. Full of valour, they crossed the seas with speed to England, there to get back his possessions for King Lear, and to drive away his cruel daughters from their thrones.

Cordelia herself went with the French forces, and led them into the field. A great battle was fought near Dover. Regan and Goneril were defeated, and doomed to death, by general consent, for their crimes and cruelty, and the crown was given back to King Lear. But alas, in the very hour of triumph the gentle Cordelia was slain !



"But when he heard Cordelia's death
Who died indeed for love, . . .
The swooning fell upon her breast,
From whence he never parted."

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When the old King heard of her death, who had indeed died for love of her dear father, in whose cause she had set in motion this battle, he fell swooning on her breast. His heart was broken ; his life was done. Never more would he be parted from his loving child ; in death they were again together, as in the happy days of old.

The Children in the Wood



MORE than three hundred years ago there lived in Norfolk a gentleman of good estate, who was as much esteemed for his true and honourable nature as for his large possessions. He had a tender, loving wife, with whom he lived in great content and happiness; and they had two dear little children—one, a pretty boy of three years old; the other, a lovely little girl, still younger.

But there came a sad day when the gentleman fell very sick, and was like to die; and then his wife, too, fell ill. Nothing could save them, and they were soon lying in the same grave. They had always been kind and good to each other, and now they were not to be parted. In love they lived, and in love they died; and their two little babes were left behind with no father or mother.

The children, however, were by no means destitute. By his will, the gentleman left to his little son the sum of three hundred pounds a year, which was to come to him when he was of age. To his little daughter Jane

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he left five hundred pounds, to be paid down upon her marriage-day, free and uncontrolled. But if the children chanced to die before they came of age, their wealth was to go to their uncle, in whose charge the little heir and heiress were placed.

“Now, brother, look to my dear children,” said the dying man. “Be good to my boy and girl, for they have no other friends here. To God and to you I recommend them to-day. My wife and I have surely but a little while to stay within this world. You must be both father and mother and uncle all in one. God knows what will become of them when I am dead and gone.”

With that, their mother also spoke in pleading for her little ones.

“Oh, brother kind,” she said, “you are the man that must bring our babes to wealth or misery. And if you keep them carefully, then God will reward you ; but if you deal with them otherwise, then God will judge your deeds.” Then, with lips as cold as any stone, they kissed their children. “God bless you, dear children !” they said, and tears fell from the eyes of all who beheld that sad parting.

The man’s brother, although of no tender nature, was for the moment also touched with pity.

“Sweet sister, do not fear the keeping of your little ones,” he said. “God never prosper me or mine, nor anything else I have, if I wrong your dear children when you are laid in the grave !”

When the parents were dead, the uncle took the children to his own home, where for a while he treated them very kindly, petting and making much of them.

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But as the days passed, his avaricious and covetous nature began to assert itself. He grudged all the wealth that was to be wasted, as he expressed it, on these youngsters. Three hundred pounds a year ! Why should the boy have that without doing anything to earn it ? He would certainly squander it in some foolish fashion ; it would only encourage him in lazy and luxurious habits. Then, the marriage dowry of five hundred pounds for little Jane ! He felt enraged every time he looked at her innocent baby face, and thought how much this sum would mean to himself. To be given her on her wedding-day, too, which was to be quite uncontrolled ! Was there ever a more senseless arrangement ? Of course, such a dowry would attract plenty of worthless scamps, who would seek to marry the maiden for the sake of her money ; and Jane, being weak, as all women are where a handsome face is concerned, would be sure to be fooled by the first good-looking rascal that came her way. Now, if only he had the money how useful it would be to him !

Thus argued the covetous man, till gradually he wished more and more that the children should be got out of the way in order that he might get possession of their wealth. Before a year was over, he had devised a scheme to get rid of them.

Those were wild and lawless times, and the constant brawls and civil wars had left loose in England many a bold ruffian, who would hesitate at no deed of violence for the sake of gain. The wicked uncle hired two such ruffians, and bargained that they should take away the young children, and slay them in a wood, while at the



“And he that was of mildest mood
Did slay the other there,
Within an unfrequented wood;
The babes did quake for feare!”

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same time he told his wife an artful tale that he was sending them to London, to be brought up by a friend of his.

Away, then, went the pretty babes, merry and rejoicing because they were going for a ride on "cock-horse." So sweetly and pleasantly did they prattle as they rode on their way, to those who should have been their murderers that their pretty speeches made even these rough men relent, and they sorely repented that they had ever taken such a deed in hand. Yet one of them, harder of heart, vowed he would perform his charge, because the wretch who hired him had paid him so largely.

The other man would not agree to this, and said the children's lives should be spared. So they fell into angry strife, and presently to desperate fighting. It was in a lonely wood, and the poor little boy and girl stood by, quaking with terror at the sight. At last the man who was of milder mood slew the other.

Then he took the weeping children by the hand, bidding them straightway follow him, and lo! they did not cry. Two long miles he led them, while they piteously complained for food. Then he halted in a lonely part of the forest.

"Stay here," quoth he. "I will bring you bread when I come back again."

The pretty babes, hand-in-hand, went wandering up and down, but they never saw the man approaching to bring them food. Their little lips were all stained with the blackberries, and when they saw the darksome night they sat down and wept.

Thus the poor little innocents wandered about till

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death put an end to their grief, and in each other's arms they died. No burial from man did this pretty pair receive, but Robin Redbreast and the little birds of the forest lovingly covered them with leaves.

And now the heavy wrath of God fell on their wicked uncle. His mind was haunted by evil fiends, and his conscience gave him no peace day or night, so that he lived in constant torment. Nothing went well with him. His barns took fire, his goods were consumed, his lands became barren, his cattle died in the field. Everything he touched fell to ruin and decay. In a voyage to Portugal two of his sons perished, and to conclude, he himself was brought to abject want and misery. Before seven years had passed he had pawned and mortgaged all his lands, and he finally died in gaol, where he had been thrown for debt.

Now at length his wicked act was revealed, for the fellow who had taken in hand to kill the children was arrested for robbery and condemned to die, whereupon he confessed the whole truth of the story as it here appears. Let all who have the care of helpless or fatherless children take warning by the miserable end of the wicked uncle. Render to each his due right, lest God with like misery requite all evil doing.

King Cophetua and the Beggar-Maid



INCE in Africa there ruled a mighty Prince whose name was Cophetua, and who had the strange peculiarity that he cared for no woman. No matter how lovely or how charming might be the ladies who came under his notice, none had power to win him to any feeling of affection. He disdained

them all, and held in scorn those foolish people who imagined themselves "in love" with each other.

But King Cophetua was not to escape the usual fate of mankind, and Cupid, the little god of love, who shoots his arrows right and left into the hearts of unheeding mortals, had a shaft in his quiver ready also for the haughty monarch. And mark how complete was his downfall! He who had been invincible to the charms of stately and high-born dames was to fall a hapless victim to the spell of a wandering beggar maiden!

For it happened one day that, gazing in idle mood from his chamber window, King Cophetua saw standing below at the palace gate a troop of strolling beggars.

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And there among them, bare-footed and bare-headed, in her tattered robe of hodden grey, stood one maiden, so enchantingly beautiful that no sooner did King Cophetua behold her than straightway he fell in love with her.

For a moment he stared in startled amaze, scarcely knowing what had happened.

“What sudden chance is this,” he said to himself almost angrily. “Must I be subject to love, who never would agree to it, but always defied it?”

He resolved he would look on her no more. He left the window, and flung himself down on his bed, trying to drive away all remembrance of the maiden whose beauty shone forth like a star amid her sordid surroundings. But all was in vain; he was tormented by a thousand conflicting thoughts. At one moment his only idea was to crave her love; the next, he was seeking some way to conquer his fancy, so that he should not have to wed her. But all his efforts to free himself were useless; Cupid’s arrow had too deeply pierced his heart. Unless he could get some cure for his care from the maiden herself, he felt he must die of the wound.

As he lay musing, therefore, he devised a plan by which he could speak with her who had so amazed his eyes.

“My life rests in thee,” he exclaimed aloud, “for surely thou shalt be my wife, or else this hand shall put an end to my existence!”

Thus saying, he sprang from his bed, and went out to the gate of his palace. Little did the maiden think when she saw him approaching what was about to happen.



"For thou," quoth he, "shall be my wife,
And honoured for my queene;
With thee I mean to lead my life,
As shortly shall be seen."

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As soon as the other beggars caught sight of the King advancing in his robe and crown, they all came cringing and crowding around, whining for alms.

“The gods preserve your Majesty!” they all began to cry. “Vouchsafe to give us of your charity to buy food for our children.”

King Cophetua tossed his purse among them, and they all rushed to secure a share in the spoil, scuffling and wrangling over the division of its contents, and then scrambled off in haste to spend what each had managed to grab for himself. The maiden alone made no attempt to join in the dispute, but stood aloof, like a lily among foul weeds, and when her companions, heedless of her presence, hurried off in greedy haste, she prepared slowly to follow them.

But King Cophetua called to her to come back, and she came and stood before him. Then he took his own royal chain, and threw it round her neck.

“With us you shall remain until such time as we die,” said the King, “for you shall be my wife, and honoured as my Queen. Our wedding shall be held at once, and everything appointed that is meet and fitting. Come, follow me; you shall be properly arrayed in seemly attire.—What is your name, fair maid?”

“Penelophon, O King!” answered the damsel modestly, and with that she made him a low curtsey, full of the sweetest grace.

Then the King took her by the hand, and led her to his palace, entertaining her the while with the most courteous talk, and treating her with the greatest respect. The maiden blushed scarlet red, and then straight again

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turned deadly pale ; but not a word she spoke, she was in such amazement. But at last, "O King, I do rejoice that you have chosen me, I who am of so low degree," she said in a trembling voice.

When the wedding-day came, King Cophetua ordered that all the noblemen should wait on the Queen with full state and ceremony. And Penelophon bore herself that day with royal grace and dignity, and as if she had never tramped the highways and byways. As for her beggar's garb of hodden grey, it was quite forgotten, once she found herself clad in costly robes of splendour.

So King Cophetua was married, and thus we see how he who disdained all thoughts of love was glad in the end to wed a beggar maid. They led a quiet, happy life, beloved by all during their princely reign, and when they died were buried in the same tomb. All their people lamented for them with bitter sorrow, to all alike—lords, ladies, and common folk—their death was a great grief. The fame of King Cophetua and the beautiful beggar maiden, his bride, spread through all the world to every kingdom, and still, like a star in undiminished splendour, shines through all the passing ages.

King Alfred and the Shepherd



DAYS of old it often happened that Kings and rulers who wished to see for themselves the lives led by their subjects laid aside their robes of State, and putting on mean apparel mingled freely and unknown among folk of a humbler class.

Thus it happened once with King Alfred. For, hearing of the rustic sports enjoyed by the peasantry, and how Dick and Tom in clouted shoes and russet grey counted themselves better than those who went in fine raiment, King Alfred forsook his stately court and went forth one day in unknown disguise. His garments were ragged and torn, as if beggars had rent them ; he carried a good strong sword and buckler, to give a rap to any saucy knave ; and on his head, instead of a crown, he wore a flat cap.

Thus coasting through Somerset, he met near Newton Court a lusty shepherd swain, marching proudly up and

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down. He wore a bonnet of good grey cloth buttoned close to his chin, and at his back a leather scrip with plenty of good food in it.

"God speed, good shepherd!" said King Alfred. "I have come to be thy guest to-day, to taste of thy good victuals. Thy scrip, I know, hath store of good cheer, meat and drink of the best."

"What then?" said the shepherd. "Thou seemst to be some sturdy thief, and makest me sore afraid. Yet if thou wilt win thy dinner, take thy sword and buckler, and make, if thou canst, an entrance therewith in my scrip. I tell thee, rascal, it hath store of beef and fat bacon, with sheaves of barley bread to make thy mouth water. Here stands my bottle, here my bag, if thou canst win them, rascal! And here is my sheep-hook against thy sword and buckler!"

"Good," quoth the King. "It shall never be said that Alfred stood a whit afraid of the shepherd's hook."

So to it they fell, giving bang for bang, and at every blow the shepherd gave, King Alfred's sword jangled, His buckler proved his chief defence, for the shepherd's hook was what the King could never overcome. At last, when they had fought four hours, and it grew just to noontide, they were both wearied out, and with right good will wished each other to stop.

"A truce, I crave!" then cried the King. "Good shepherd, hold thy hand. No sturdier fellow than thyself lives in this country."

"Nor a lustier rascal than thou art!" retorted the churlish shepherd. "To tell thee plain, thy thievish look makes my heart afraid. Or else, sure, thou art some

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prodigal, who hast consumed all thine own store, and now art come wandering in this place to rob and steal other folks'."

"Think not thus of me, good shepherd," said Alfred. "I am a well-known gentleman in good King Alfred's court."

"The devil thou art!" said the shepherd rudely. "A fine gentleman, forsooth! Thou goest all in rags. Thou rather seemst, I think, to be some low-born beggar. But if thou like to mend thy estate, and be a shepherd here, thou shalt go home with me to-night to Gillian, my sweet wife. For she is as good a toothless old dame as ever mumbled brown bread. And thou shalt lie in hempen sheets on a bed of fresh straw. We have a good store of cider and whey, and keep a good pease-straw fire, and now and then barley-cakes for better days. As for my master, who is lord and chief of Newton Court, he keeps his shepherd swains in even braver fashion. There we have curds and clotted cream, made from the fresh morning's milk, and now and then fine buttered cakes; and we have likewise plenty of beef and bacon, nice and fat and greasy. Thus, if thou wilt become my man, thou shalt have this treatment. If not, adieu; go hang thyself! And so farewell, sir knave!"

King Alfred, after hearing all the shepherd said, was well content to be his man, so they made a bargain, and the shepherd gave a penny in earnest of it. The new-comer was to keep his sheep in field and fold, according to the usual custom of shepherds. His wages were to be full ten groats for a year's service. Yet the old man was not wont, he said, to hire a man so dear.

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“For if the King himself came to my cottage,” he quoth, “he would not for a twelvemonth’s pay receive a larger sum.”

King Alfred was greatly amused at the jest, but not to spoil sport he was content in everything to fit in with the shepherd’s humour. With a sheep-hook, therefore, and with a tar-box at his side, and with his dog Patch, he hied cheek by jowl with his master home to Gillian.

“Whom have you here?” exclaimed the shepherd’s wife the moment she caught sight of him. “A fellow, I suspect, who will cut our throats, he looks so like a knave.”

“Not so, old dame,” said King Alfred quickly. “You need have no fear of me. My master hired me for ten groats to serve you for a whole year. So, good dame Gillian, grant me leave to stay in your house, for by St. Anne, whatever you do, I will not go away yet.”

Her churlish usage still amused him, though he was put to such proof that he was almost choked that night under the smoky roof. But as he sat with a smiling face to see what would be the end of it all, the dame brought forth a piece of dough, which she threw down in front of the fire. There, lying on the hearth to bake, the cake presently happened to burn, whereupon Dame Gillian flew into a violent temper.

“Canst thou not take the pains to turn it, thou lout?” she demanded angrily. “Thou art more ready to take it out and eat it up half baked than to stay until it be properly done,—and this thy manners show. But serve me another trick like that, and I’ll thwack thee on the snout!”

King Alfred and the Shepherd

Her violent words made the patient King, good man, rather in dread of her, but finally she and her husband went to bed, leaving their new servant to his own repose.

But such a lodging as this King Alfred had never had in his life. He lay on white sheep's wool, new pulled from a tanned hide, and over his head dangled spider's webs as if they had been bells.

"Is this country fashion?" he thought. "Then I will not stay here, but will be gone as soon as the day breaks."

Cackling hens and geese roosted and perched at his side, and at last the watchful cock made known it was the morning. Then up got Alfred, and with his horn blew so long a blast that it quite dismayed Gillian and her husband where they lay in bed.

"Arise! We are undone!" cried the old woman. "This night we have lodged unawares in our house a false, dissembling knave! Rise, husband, rise! He is calling for his mates. I would give old Will, our fatted lamb, if he were outside our gates!"

But still King Alfred blew his horn, louder and louder, till a hundred lords and knights came and alighted at the door of the shepherd's hut.

"All hail, good King, all hail!" they cried. "Long have we sought your grace!"

"And here you find your sovereign, my merry men all!" returned the King.

"We shall surely both be hanged, old Gillian, I greatly fear, for using our good King Alfred thus," said the shepherd.

"Oh, pardon, my liege, for my husband and me!"

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implored the old woman. "By these ten bones," holding up her hands, "I never thought what I now see."

"And by my hook," added the shepherd (a good oath and true), "before this time I never knew your Highness. Then pardon me and my old wife, that we may say hereafter that it was a happy day when first you came to our house."

"It shall be done," said Alfred at once, "and Gillian, thy old dame, deserveth not so much blame for using me so churlishly. For it is thy country fashion, I see, to be so bluntish; and where the plainest meaning is, there is the smallest ill. And, master, see here, for thy manhood lately shown, I will bestow on you for your own a thousand sheep, and as much pasture-ground as will suffice to feed them all. And I will change this hut into a stately mansion."

"And for the same, as in duty bound, good King," answered the shepherd, "I will bring to your Highness once every year a milk-white lamb. And Gillian, my wife, likewise of wool to make you cloth, shall every new year give you as much as shall be worth ten groats. And once every year my bagpipe shall sweetly sound in your praise—how Alfred, our renowned King, most kindly came to the shepherd's hut."

"Thanks, shepherd, thanks," responded the King. "The next time I come, my lords with me, here in this house, we will all be merry together."

The Nut-Brown Maid



HETHER it be right or wrong, men frequently complain of women that it is labour spent in vain to love them, for never a bit do they love a man in return. For let one do whatever he can to obtain their favour, if but a new suitor come after them, their first true lover labours for nought, for straightway the fickle woman forgets all about him.

I know not how this may be, except that it is written and said all day long that constancy in womankind has now utterly died out. Yet, nevertheless, a right good witness could be given that their love is true and constant. In proof of this, record the Nut-Brown Maid, who, when her lover came to test her, making his moan to her, refused to forsake him, for in her heart she loved but him alone.

For, as the story goes, one night, as secretly as he could, her lover came to her, saying :

“ Alas, thus stands the case—I am a banished man !”

“ What is your will ?” said the maiden. “ Tell me, and I will fulfil it. My own heart’s dearest, what is the

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matter? Tell me, I pray you, for in my heart, of all mankind, I love but you."

"Thus it stands," said the knight. "A deed has been done from which great harm may come. My destiny is either to die a shameful death, or else to flee; it must be one of these things. I know no other way but to fly as an outlaw and betake me to my bow. Wherefore, farewell, my own true heart, for I must go to the greenwood alone, a banished man."

"Oh, Lord, what is this world's bliss that changes as the moon!" cried the maiden, wringing her hands in grief. "My summer's day is darkened ere its prime! I hear you say, 'Farewell!' Nay, we do not part so soon! Why do you say that? Whither will you go? Alas! what have you done? If you go and leave me, all my happiness will change to care and sorrow, for in my heart I love but you only."

"I can believe that at first it will somewhat grieve and trouble you," answered the knight, "but afterwards, within a few days, your bitter pain will abate, and you will again take comfort. Why should you do anything? It is but labour spent in vain for you to take thought in the matter. Trouble no more, I pray you heartily, for I must go, a banished man, alone to the greenwood."

"Now, since you have shown me the secret of your mind," said the maiden steadily, "I will be as plain to you again. Since it is thus, and you must go to the greenwood, I will not be left behind, for it shall never be said the Nut-Brown Maid was unkind to her love. Make you ready, for so am I, although it were at once. For of all mankind, I love but you only."



"Myne own hart dere, with you what chere?
I pray you tell anone;
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde
I love but you alone."

The Nut-Brown Maid

"Yet I counsel you to take good heed what people will think and say," said the knight. "For it will be told by everyone that you have run away after me to frolic at your will in the forest, instead of staying quietly at home like a modest maiden. Rather than that for my sake you should get an ill name, I would go alone to the greenwood."

"Though it should be said by everyone that I am to blame, theirs is the fault who hurt my name by speaking such slander!" cried the maid indignantly. "I will prove that faithful love is devoid of shame. It would be shame rather if in your sorrow and distress I parted from you. And surely those who would not do as I do are no true lovers."

"I counsel you," said the knight again, "it is no maiden's lore to fear nothing, but to run off and dwell with an outlaw in the forest, for there you must always bear a bow in your hand, ready to shoot, and thus, like a thief, you must live always in dread, whereby great harm may come to you. Then would I rather that I had gone alone to the greenwood."

"I know it is thus, and as you say, it is no maiden's lore, but for your sake love may make me go on foot and shoot and hunt to get us food. So that I have your company, I ask no more, for it maketh my heart cold as any stone to think of parting from you."

"For an outlaw this is the law—that men take him and bind him, to be hanged without pity, and to dangle in the wind. If I had need (which God forbid!), what rescue could you find? Forsooth, I know well, you and your bow would soon withdraw, for fear—and no

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marvel, either—for your counsel would then be of little avail.”

“Right well you know that women are but feeble to fight. No womanhood is it to be as bold as a warrior. Yet, even in such fear, if you were attacked by enemies day or night, I would withstand them bow in hand, to grieve them if I could.”

“Yet take good heed,” urged the knight, “for I fear you could never sustain the thorny ways, the deep valleys, the rain, the snow, the frost, the cold, the heat ; for, wet or dry, we must lodge on the bare ground, with no other roof than a briar-bush above our heads. You would then be sorry you had come, and would wish I had gone alone, a banished man, to the greenwood.”

“Since I have been partner in your joy and bliss, it is only reason that I endure part of your woe,” said the maiden quietly. “I am sure of one pleasure, and that is, that wherever you are it seems to me nothing can be much amiss. Now, without more words, I beseech you, let us be gone at once.”

“Nay, consider well what you will have to endure,” said the knight again. “When you are hungry and wish to dine, there will be no meat for you to get, no drink such as wine or ale. You will have no clean woven sheets to lie between, no other house but leaves and branches. Oh, my sweetheart, this evil diet will make you pale and wan, therefore I will go alone to the greenwood.”

“Among the wild deer, such an archer as men say you are cannot fail of good victual where there is so great a plenty,” said the maid stoutly. “And the clear water

The Nut-Brown Maid

of the river shall be full sweet to me. With that I shall endure right well in health, as you shall see. And before we go, I can at once provide a bed or two."

"But look, you must do more if you will go with me," continued the knight. "You must cut your hair short by the ear, and your kirtle by the knee; and you must be ready to fight your enemies, bow in hand, if there be need. If you will fulfil all this, do it as shortly as you can, for I must fly this very night, before daylight, to the woods."

"Now will I do more for you than belongeth to my womanhood," said the brave maiden. "To cut my hair, to carry a bow, to shoot in time of need!—Oh, my sweet mother, it is you of whom I think the most! But farewell now; I must follow where fortune leads.—Come, let us fly, for the day cometh fast upon us."

"Nay, nay, not so," said the knight, still striving to throw every difficulty in the way. "You shall not go, and I will tell you why. I see well it is your nature to be light and fickle in love. Just as you have said to me you would have answered any man, whoever it might be, that asked you. There is an old saying, 'Soon hot, soon cold,' and so it is with a woman."

"If you will consider, there is no need to say such words of me," said the maiden with gentle dignity. "I am no light-minded woman, swayed by every passing fancy. For often you prayed, and long you tried, before I loved you. And though I am a Baron's daughter, yet you have proved how I loved you, a squire of low degree. And so I shall, whatever befall, though I were to die for having loved you."

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"A Baron's daughter to be beguiled, that were a base deed!" said the knight gloomily. "To be companion with an outlaw. God forbid! Far better were it for the poor squire to go alone to the forest than that you should say some later day that you were betrayed by my cursed deed. Wherefore, good maid, the best counsel I can give you is to let me go alone."

"Whatever befall, I shall never upbraid you for this," declared the maiden; "but if you go and leave me thus, then have you betrayed me. Mind well how you deal with me, for if, as you said, you are so unkind as to leave behind your love, the Nut-Brown Maid, trust me truly, I shall die soon after you have gone."

"If you went to the forest, you would repent," said the knight, "for I have provided myself with another maid whom I love more than you. She is fairer than you ever were, and both of you would be jealous of each other. It is my desire to live in peace, and so I will, if I can, and therefore I will go alone to the greenwood."

"Although I knew that you had another maiden whom you loved in the greenwood, that would not prevent my going too," said the maid steadily. "She shall always find me gentle and courteous, glad to fulfil to the best of my power all her commands. However many others you might love, I would still be faithful, for in my heart, of all mankind I love but you alone."

"My own dear love!" cried the knight. "I see the proof that you are kind and true, the best maid and wife that ever lived! Be merry and glad, dear heart, be sad no longer, for it were pity if ever you had cause to rue your loyalty to me. Be not dismayed because of anything

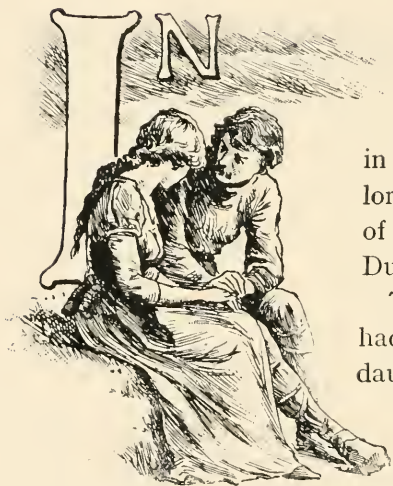
The Nut-Brown Maid

I said, for I will not go to the greenwood ; I am no banished man.”

“ These tidings are more glad to me than if I were a Queen, if I were sure they would last,” said the maiden. “ But when men would break a promise, they say what is not true. You are making up some wile to deceive me, so that you can steal away secretly. Then were the case worse than it was before, and I even more woebegone.”

“ You shall have no need to dread further,” said the knight. “ I will in no way dishonour you. God forbid ! Now understand, I will take you to Westmoreland, which is my heritage, and I will marry you with a ring, and make you my lady with all the speed I can. Thus have you won an Earl’s son, and not a banished man.”

The Strange Lives of Two Young Princes



THE reign of King Stephen there were two royal Dukes who far surpassed in greatness all our English lords. One was the Duke of Devonshire, the other the Duke of Cornwall.

The Duke of Devonshire had an only child, a beautiful daughter, whom at his death he appointed to be his only heir. He committed her lovingly to

the Duke of Cornwall, who with tenderness and care most kindly undertook the charge. Soon after obtaining this promise the Duke of Devonshire died, whereupon the Duke of Cornwall afterwards denied all he had vowed to do.

He had the maid well educated, however, and Maudlin, for that was her name, grew to be the loveliest lady in the land, and the fame of her beauty became widely

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known. Many Princes sought her love, but none could obtain the lady, for the covetous Duke of Cornwall sought to gain the dukedom for himself, and therefore kept Maudlin a close prisoner.

It happened one day that a gallant young Prince called Raymund saw the maiden by chance, and at once fell deeply in love with her. But, unhappy youth, what could he do? Maudlin was always kept closely shut up, and neither he nor any of his friends was allowed to see her. Prince Raymund was in a terrible state of despair, one moment almost pining away with grief, the next making a thousand resolves to win her by force of arms.

At length, however, his overmastering love suggested a device to him to gain an entrance into the forbidden ground, although to accomplish this he was compelled to leave his lordly state and change into a kitchen drudge. For though princely suitors were debarred from beholding the beautiful Lady Maudlin, this by no means applied to the menials of the household, and in the guise of a humble serving-man Raymund got access to the castle. Once there, he lost no time in showing his love and devotion to his young mistress, but her pride would not allow her to listen to him, and to all his advances she persisted in declaring she meant to remain husbandless.

Meanwhile, her guardian, the Duke of Cornwall, kept beating his brains as to how he could secure her dukedom, not caring in the least what became of its rightful owner, so long as he could thrive by her. He thought it would be a good plan to wed her to some peasant, hoping by this means to get her out of the way; and he resolved

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that Raymund, whom he then supposed to be some low-born drudge, should serve his purpose.

But Maudlin, marking her guardian's intent, took it very unkindly that he should bar her from any noble marriage by thus wedding her to one of base degree. Slipping out of doors, she managed to depart by stealth, preferring to seek her own fortune in the world rather than wed a poor churl, when she might have lived in wealth and honour.

When Raymund heard of Maudlin's escape, he was deeply grieved, and leaving the Duke's palace with a sad heart departed in search of her. Forgetful of himself and his birth, of his country, his friends, and everything, his only thought was to find the maiden who held his heart in thrall. Nor did he intend after this to frequent the court or stately towns, but lived in pinching care and poverty in lonely country places.

For two years he tried a shepherd's life on Salisbury Plain, feeding his flocks with great content, and hoping by degrees to wear out his love. But now a strange thing happened. In his heart a second love began to spring up, and this was worse than even before.

For near where Raymund kept his flocks, a country wench, a neat-herd's maid, also fed her drove, and with this girl the Prince now fell deeply in love. Sitting on the breezy downs, and having very little to do, these shepherds soon began to chat in friendly fashion, and before long the Prince openly wooed the damsel.

"I know, fair maid," quoth Raymond, "and you know it as well as I do, that no woman would willingly die unmarried. Who, then, would be the best for a hus-

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band ? A ploughman's labour is never ended, and he is likely to prove but a churl ; a tradesman has too much work on hand to think of love ; a merchant has to venture abroad, and is jealous of the wife who stays behind. Then choose a shepherd, bonny lass, whose life is the best of all, for he spends his life merrily on the fair green hills and downs. Then at night, when day is done, he goes home early, and has time to roast an apple by the fire, and sing a merry rhyme. Nor lacks he tales, while the nut-brown bowl goes round, and sitting, sings away his care till he betakes himself to bed. There he sleeps soundly all night, forgetting the cares of the morrow. He fears neither the blasting of his corn nor the robbery of his goods. This I know full well, fair lass, that the shepherd sleeps and wakes more quiet nights and days than he who owns the cattle he feeds.

“ A King is but a man, and so am I. Content is worth a monarchy, and mischief aims at those in high places. For so of late it happened to a Duke dwelling not far from hence, who had a daughter, the fairest maiden (saving thyself) on earth.”

The shepherdess had listened to all that Raymund said, and now she sighed deeply.

“ Speak on,” she said, “ and tell me how fair was this maiden, and who she was that thus surpassed all others in beauty.”

“ She was of stately grace and most fair countenance,” said Raymund. “ No maid alive could well compare with her for beauty.” And then, one by one, in a musing tone, he called back to memory the features of his beloved Maudlin. “ Golden hair, a smooth, high forehead,

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a seemly nose, greyish eyes, rosy cheeks, ruddy lips, teeth like white ivory, a perfect mouth, a round and dimpled chin, a snow-white neck, with bluish veins to make it seem the whiter ; yea, all her body framed so daintily that earth had none more rare. For life, for love, for form, for face, none could be fairer than Maudlin, and no one but herself could be so fair."

"I know the lady well," quoth the shepherdess, "but she is unworthy of such praise. But believe me, thou art no shepherd ; thy words betray thee."

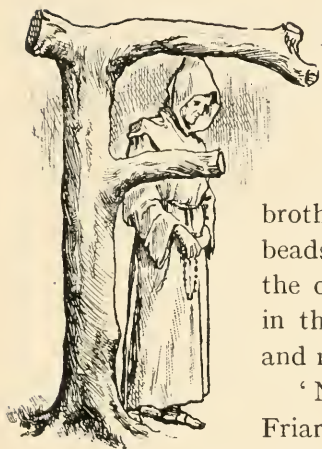
With that the tears rose to Prince Raymund's eyes, and she was aware of them, and they both kept silence. Then, equally perplexed in love, they both wept.

"In sooth, I am not such as I seem to profess," said the shepherd. "I am by birth a Prince's son. My father's court is in Scotland, and my name is Raymund. I lived in pomp till love changed my whole life. Dearly I loved that lady, but she loved not me ; but now that love is all wasted, and I die for thee."

"I grant that you loved her well," said the shepherdess, "yet think yourself to be just as much in love with me, your second love. Your twice-beloved Maudlin here submits herself to you, and what she could not be at the first time, she shall be at the second—changed in fortune, but not in person. For I am still the same, chaste and true in heart and mind, as when you came to me first."

Then with joy they tenderly embraced, and soon found fitting time and place for the wished-for wedding-day. So these two young Princes befriended each other, and after many a hard mishap their love had a joyful ending.

The Friar of Orders Grey



AR away in a lonely part of England stood a large convent belonging to the order of Grey Friars, and on an evening in spring one of the brothers walked forth to tell his beads. As he paced up and down the outer cloisters, a fair lady, clad in the guise of a pilgrim, came up and respectfully saluted him.

‘Now, Christ save thee, reverend Friar! I pray thee tell me if thou didst ever see my true love at yonder holy shrine? I have wandered many a weary mile in search of him.’

“And how should I know your true love from many another one?” asked the friar.

“By his hat with a cockle-shell, and his staff, and his sandals, for he, too, is a pilgrim,” answered the lady. “But chiefly by his face and bearing, for he was right comely to see, with curling flaxen locks, and eyes of lovely blue.”

The Friar paused a moment, then said in a solemn voice :

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"He is dead and gone, lady. Over his head is the grass-green turf, and at his feet a stone. Within these holy cloisters he languished for a long time, lamenting for the love of a lady, and complaining of her pride. At last he died. He is buried over yonder within the churchyard wall, and many a tear bedewed his grave."

"And art thou dead, thou gentle youth?" cried the lady, bursting into tears. "And didst thou die for love of me? Break, my cruel heart of stone!"

"Weep not, lady, weep not so," said the Friar. "Seek some comfort for thy soul. Let not thy heart be rent with unavailing sorrow."

But the lady refused to listen to his attempts at consolation.

"Oh, holy Friar, do not reprove my grief," she pleaded, "for I have lost the sweetest youth that ever won lady's love. And now I will evermore weep his loss. For him only I wished to live, for him I wish to die!"

"Weep no more, lady," repeated the Friar, "weep no more. Thy sorrow is of no avail.

"For violets plucked, the sweetest showers
Will ne'er make grow again."

Our joys fly like winged dreams. Why, then, should sorrows last?"

"Say not so, holy Friar, for since it was for me my true love died, 'tis meet my tears should flow for him. And will he never come back? Ah no, he is dead and laid in his grave. So young and so comely! Alas, and woe is me!"

"Sigh no more, lady," urged the Friar, "sigh no



“Yet stay, fair lady, turn again,
And dry those pearly tears ;
For see, beneath this gown of grey,
Thy owne true love appears.”

The Friar of Orders Grey

more. Men were always deceivers, never constant to one thing. Hadst thou been fond to him, he would have been false to thee, and left thee sad and desolate, for since leaves first grew on trees young men were always found to be fickle."

"Now say not so," cried the lady. "My love had the truest heart. Oh, he was ever true!—And art thou dead, beloved youth? Then farewell, home! Henceforth, for ever, I will be a pilgrim. But first upon my true love's grave I will lay my weary limbs, and thrice I will kiss the grass-green turf that covers him."

"Yet stay, fair lady," said the Friar; "rest awhile on this seat beneath these cloisters, for see how through the hawthorn the cold wind blows, and the drizzling rain falls."

"Stay me not, I pray thee, holy Friar. No rain that falls on me can wash away my fault."

"Yet stay, fair lady; turn again, and dry those tears," cried the Friar. "For see beneath this gown of grey thine own true love. Forced by grief and hopeless love, I took refuge in this garb, and thought within these lonely walls to end my days. But haply, as my year of probation is not yet over, if I might still hope to win thy love, I would no longer stay here."

"Now farewell grief, and welcome joy!" cried the lady, as her lover clasped her in a long embrace. "Since I have found thee, my beloved, we will never part again."

The Hunting of the Cheviot



N days of old the Borderland between England and Scotland was the scene of constant feud and bloodshed. In order to preserve peace, strict laws were made to govern the conduct of those who dwelt on the "March," as that region was called; but the Borderers were a wild, lawless race, ever impatient of control, and with a fierce pride and valour always ready to be up in arms.

One of the well-known March laws was that the dwellers on both sides of the Border were not to hunt in each other's territory without express permission from the warden to whom the district belonged. This law was constantly infringed, and even so late as the days of Queen Elizabeth, Carey, Earl of Monmouth, who was one of the March wardens on the English side, complained that the Scottish Borderers would, without asking leave, come into England and hunt at their pleasure, and stay their own time. He wrote to Farnhurst, the warden on the Scottish side, to say that he

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did not wish in any way to hinder them of their accustomed sport, and if according to the ancient custom they sent to him for leave, they should have all he could do to content them; but if otherwise they continued their wonted course, he would do his best to hinder them. Within a month after this, the Scottish Borderers came and hunted, as they used to do, without leave, and cut down wood and carried it away. Towards the end of the summer they came again. This time the English warden sent out a small force in pursuit, who came up with the intruders and set upon them. Special orders, however, had been given that as little hurt as possible was to be done. Twelve of the principal gentlemen were taken and brought to Witherington, where Carey then was. He made them welcome, and gave them the best entertainment he could. They stayed in the castle two or three days, and then Carey sent them back to their own home, they assuring him that they would never hunt again without leave.*

The incident commemorated in *The Hunting of the Cheviot*, however, occurred long before this, probably early in the fifteenth century.

The two great Border families between whom raged perpetual strife were the houses of Percy and Douglas. "There was never a time in the March regions," says the old chronicler, "since the Douglas and the Percy met, that it was a marvel if the red blood did not run as the rain does in the street."

The Percy, then, out of Northumberland sent open

* This incident is recorded by Prof. Hales, in the introduction to Chevy Chase, in the edition of *Bishop Percy's Folio MS.*

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challenge to Earl Douglas. Defying the old Border law, he vowed to God that within three days he would hunt in the mountains of Cheviot, in spite of Douglas and all who might be with him. The fattest harts, he said, he would kill and carry away.

“By my faith,” answered back the doughty Douglas, “I will hinder that hunting if I can.”

Then the Percy came out from Bamborough, and a mighty train with him—fifteen hundred bold archers, chosen out of three shires in Northumberland: Islandshire, so named from Holy Island; Norehamshire, so called from the castle and town of Noreham, or Norham; and Bamboroughshire, the district belonging to Bamborough Castle and town.

The hunting began on a Monday at morn, and the child that is yet unborn might rue that woeful day. The silence of the lonely hills now echoed to the sound of the chase. Through the woods went drivers to raise the startled deer; bowmen with their broad flashing arrows filled every open glade; the wild woodland creatures fled in terror on all sides; greyhounds darted through bush and brake to kill the flying deer.

The chase began in the hills above Cheviot early on Monday, and before noon a hundred fat harts lay there dead.

They blew a mort (the notes that are blown at the death of a stag) on an open space of rough grass, and the hunters assembled on all sides, and then came Earl Percy to see the quarry and the brittling, or cutting-up, of the deer.

“It was the Douglas’s promise to meet me here this

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day," he said. "But," he added, with a great oath, "I knew he would fail verily."

At last a squire of Northumberland looked quite near, and he was aware of the doughty Douglas coming, and with him a great train of followers, armed with spear, bill, and brand. It was a mighty sight to see; hardier men of heart or hand were not in Christendom.

There were twenty hundred good spearmen or more, and they were born beside the waters of the Tweed, in the lands of Teviotdale.

"Leave the brittling of the deer," cried Earl Percy, "and look ye take good heed to your bows, for never since your mothers bore you had ye so great need."

In front of his men, on a milk-white steed, rode the doughty Douglas, his armour glowing like a red-hot coal. Never a bolder boy-child was born.

"Tell me what men ye are, or whose men ye be," he said. "Who gave you leave to hunt in this Cheviot Chase in despite of me?"

The first man who made answer to him was the good Lord Percy.

"We will not tell you what men we are, nor whose men we be," he said boldly. "But we will hunt here in this Chase in spite of thee and thine. The fattest harts in all the Cheviots we have killed, and we mean to carry them away."

"By my troth, then, one of us this day shall die," said the Douglas. "To kill all these guiltless men, alas, it were great pity! But, Percy, thou art a lord of land, and I, too, am called an Earl in my own country."

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Let all our men stand apart on one side, and let the battle be between thee and me."

"Now, Christ's curse on him whosoever says nay to that!" cried Percy. "By my troth, doughty Douglas, thou shalt never see that day. Neither in England, Scotland, or France, nor any man of woman born, if fortune be my chance, but I dare meet him, one man for one."

Then up spoke a squire of Northumberland; his name was Roger Witherington.

"Such a thing shall never be told in South England to King Harry the Fourth, for shame. I know you are two great lords, and I am but a poor squire; but I will never see my captain fight in field, and stand myself and look on. While I have power to wield my sword, I shall not fail, heart or hand."

The Englishmen bent their bows, their hearts were stout and true. At the first flight of arrows they slew seven score Scottish spearmen. Yet the doughty Douglas held his ground, as a good and valiant captain, standing the shock unmoved. He had parted his host in three divisions, like a wary and tried chieftain, and now with trusty spears of mighty wood they bore down from all sides on the English archers, dealing dreadful wounds and killing many.

Thus, taken at close quarters, the English flung away their bows and grasped their swords, and now it was a woeful sight to see how the flashing blades fell on shield and helm. Through rich coat of mail and many folds of armour the stern strokes pierced, and many a gallant gentleman lay dead on the ground. At last the Douglas

The Hunting of the Cheviot

and the Percy met, like captains of might, and their blades clashed together, blow for blow. They fought till the sweat ran down, and the blood spurted off their helms like hail.

“Hold thee, Percy,” said the Douglas, “and by my faith, I will bring thee where thou shalt have an Earl’s fee from Jamie, our Scottish King. Thou shalt have thy free ransom, I promise it thee here, for thou art the manfullest knight that ever I fought in field.”

“Nay, Douglas,” quoth Earl Percy, “I told it thee before, I never would yield to any man born of woman.”

With that there came a swift arrow out of a mighty shower, and it struck Earl Douglas in at the breast-bone. Through lungs and liver went the sharp arrow, so that never after he spoke again but once. And this was what he said :

“Fight ye, my merry men, whilst ye may, for my life’s days are gone.”

Earl Percy leaned upon his sword, and saw the Douglas die. He took the dead man by the hand, and said :

“Woe is me for thee ! To have saved thy life I would have parted with my lands for three years, for a better man of heart or of hand was not in all the North country.”

A Scottish knight, called Sir Hugh Montgomery, saw all that passed, and saw that the Douglas was hurt to the death. He rode on a swift horse through a hundred archers, and never stopped nor drew rein till he came to the good Lord Percy. He set upon him a blow that was full sore ; with a mighty spear he bore him clean through the body, so that a man might see a yard or more of the spear out on the other side.

So the great Earl Percy fell dead beside the dauntless

A Book of Ballad Stories

Douglas. Two better captains were not in Christendom than those who were slain there that day.

An archer of Northumberland saw how Lord Percy was slain. He bore in his hand a bent bow of trusty wood. Fitting to it an arrow a yard long, he drew the bow to the steel head of the shaft and let fly at Sir Hugh Montgomery. So sore was the stroke that the swan feathers that the arrow bore were wet with the heart's blood of the Scottish knight.

Though both the great chieftains were slain, not a man would fly one foot ; they still stood firm in the struggle, hewing at each other with many a baleful brand as long as they could hold out. This battle began in Cheviot an hour before the noon, and when the evensong bell rang it was not half done. By the light of the moon they went on fighting, but many had now no strength to stand. Of fifteen hundred archers of England, there went away but fifty-three ; of twenty hundred spearmen of Scotland, there went away but fifty-five. All the others, valorous knights and yeomen, lay dead in the hills above Cheviot. The child that is yet unborn may rue the Hunting of that day !

With the Lord Percy were slain Sir John of Agerstone ; Sir Roger, the gentle Hartley ; Sir William, the bold Heron ; Sir George, the worthy Lumley, a knight of great renown ; Sir Ralph, the rich Raby ; Sir Roger Witherington, that valiant knight who, when both his legs were hewn in two, yet knelt and fought on his knees.

With the dauntless Douglas were slain Sir Hugh Montgomery, Sir Davy Lowdale, his sister's son, Sir Charles Murray, Sir Hugh Maxwell.



“The Perse leanyde on his brande,
And saw the Douglas de;
He took the dede man by the bande,
And sayde, ‘Who is me for thee!’”

The Hunting of the Cheviot

So on the morrow they made biers of birch and hazel, and many widows, weeping, came to fetch away their husbands. Teviotdale might lament, and Northumberland make great moan, for two such captains as were there slain shall never be again on the Border.

Word came to Edinburgh to Jamie, the Scottish King, that the doughty Douglas, Lieutenant of the Marches, lay slain in the hills above Cheviot. He wailed and wrung his hands.

“Alas, and woe is me ! There shall never be again such a captain in Scotland !”

Word came to lovely London, to King Harry the Fourth, that Earl Percy, the Lieutenant of the Marches, lay slain in the hills above Cheviot.

“God have mercy on his soul !” said King Harry. “Good Lord, if it be Thy will ! I have a hundred captains in England as good as ever was he, but Percy, if I enjoy my life, thy death shall be well requited !”

As the King swore, so he kept his vow, and to avenge the Percy’s death another great battle was fought north of the Border, in which many gallant Scottish knights were slain.

This was the Hunting of the Cheviot, which began that fatal strife.

THE END

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